NO. 45

PIT

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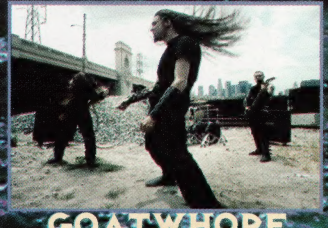

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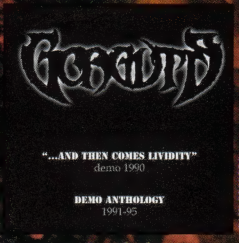

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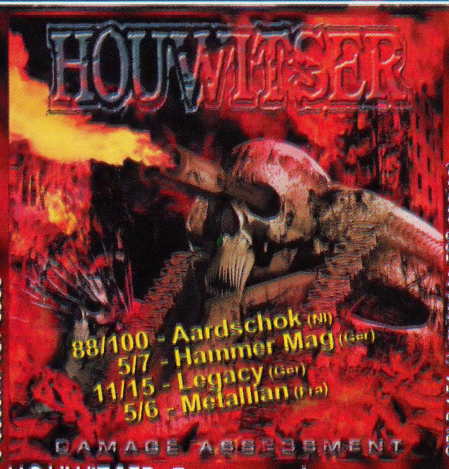

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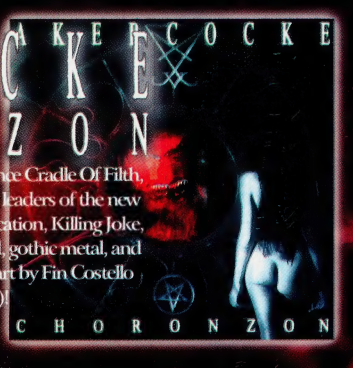

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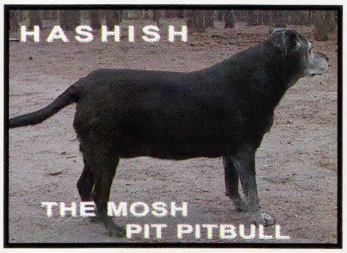

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PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Wendy Perelstein

ART DIRECTOR
James R Barnhard

ASSISTING EDITORS
Kurt Krueger
Nate Sagan
Greg Witwer

ART CONTRIBUTORS
Mike Bohatch

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Frank White
Jeff Wolfe
Fraser Dawson

WRITERS
Scott Alisoglu, Christopher Alo, Ryan Bartek, Colin Davis, Jay Gorania, Mark Kadzielawa, Micha Kite, Errin Klein, Jon 'K' Konjoyan, Kurt Krueger, Kelli Malella, Jim Mills, Freddy Rollins, Adam Sagan, Mike Wortham

COMPUTER SYSTEMS MANAGER – Erv Perelstein

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Pit Magazine Offices:
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By Micha Kite
PHOTO BY MARK DAUGHERT

Featuring Daniel Corchado THE CHASM

They say it's a long way to the top if you want to rock and roll, but what they don't tell you is some roads are tougher than others and this, my friends, is known as music industry politics. Most know Daniel Corchado as chieftain for THE CHASM, but what you might not know is the endeavor he's been through. The guy truly embraces his "metal of death" and everything that goes with it, pro or con.

Pit: How did you get involved in all of this madness?

Daniel Corchado: I started playing bass in my first band before CENOTAPH around late 1988 cause there weren't any bass players around. After CENOTAPH recorded their first album, their guitar player quit and it was hard to find a replacement, so we decided that I would give it a try. It worked for a while but then those guys didn't seem happy with my playing and that was one of the main reasons I quit. I was busting ass writing music and they didn't seem to like it. In fact the first two tracks from **THE CHASM**'s demo were songs that were supposed to be for CENOTAPH. So I quit and did my own thing.

You must have been in your late teens by then and into bands like SLAYER and METALLICA?

We were really into INCUBUS, MESSIAH, NAPALM DEATH and I remember listening to IMMOLATION's second demo a lot. We were trying to do something like that but of course we were obsessed with the Brazilian scene too like SEPULTURA, SARCOPHAGUS and PANIC and for that time in Mexico it was really, really underground.

What was it like trying to get equipment?

My first bass was really a piece of shit. I don't remember what I paid, but I'm sure it was cheap. I was able to get it but I couldn't afford to get an amplifier. I had to plug my bass into a boom box and I remember we recorded a rehearsal playing together and we didn't have a PA. To record my vocals I had to get close to the mic on another boom box and scream into it like a maniac (laughter). It came out pretty decent for the circumstances, ya know? It took me years to get decent gear. It was really expensive to get a Marshall or even a decent guitar. To get a BC Rich or a Jackson was impossible because we were middle class and we weren't rich. Now I have like six guitars...

I've noticed in a lot of photos that you're always playing a different guitar. Which one is your baby and do you have any endorsement deals going down?

No, I wish man. That's something we're going to try and go for when the Earache album comes out. My main guitar is a black American made Randy Rhoads, which is neck-through and everything. I got that in Mexico actually when we played a city that was right on the border. The guys down there can get equipment pretty easily and one of my friends Roberto who recorded our *Processions* album made a deal with me and he hooked me up with that guitar. I've used that as my main axe for several years, and you know when you work here (America) you start making money because it's so different in Mexico. You make your money there but it's just enough for your bills. When I got here I was giving tattoos and making decent money and I just went crazy! I was always a fan of guitars with a heavy metal shape. I have the Jackson Randy Rhoads, a Washburn, a BC Rich Virgin, a really old Ibanez Iceman, which I got in honor of Tom Warrior (CELTIC FROST), and two ESP guitars. One is the Explorer EX and the other is the V 350, and I really like to use that but they've discontinued it and I can't find a case for it.

Man, guitars are fuckin' resplendent creatures, aren't they? What about your rig?

I use a Marshall, but it's not a tube model, which is another thing. I went crazy with the guitars when I had the money and some shit happened where I'm not making the kind of money I was. I couldn't afford a tube Marshall so I got one of the newer solid-state models. It sounds decent but it has that buzz that

Marshall's have and its not as warm sounding as Julio's JCM 900. His sound is more heavy metal, but mine has more crunch because of the way we set up. For effects I use a little Zoom 505 pedal and it has a lot of different effects.

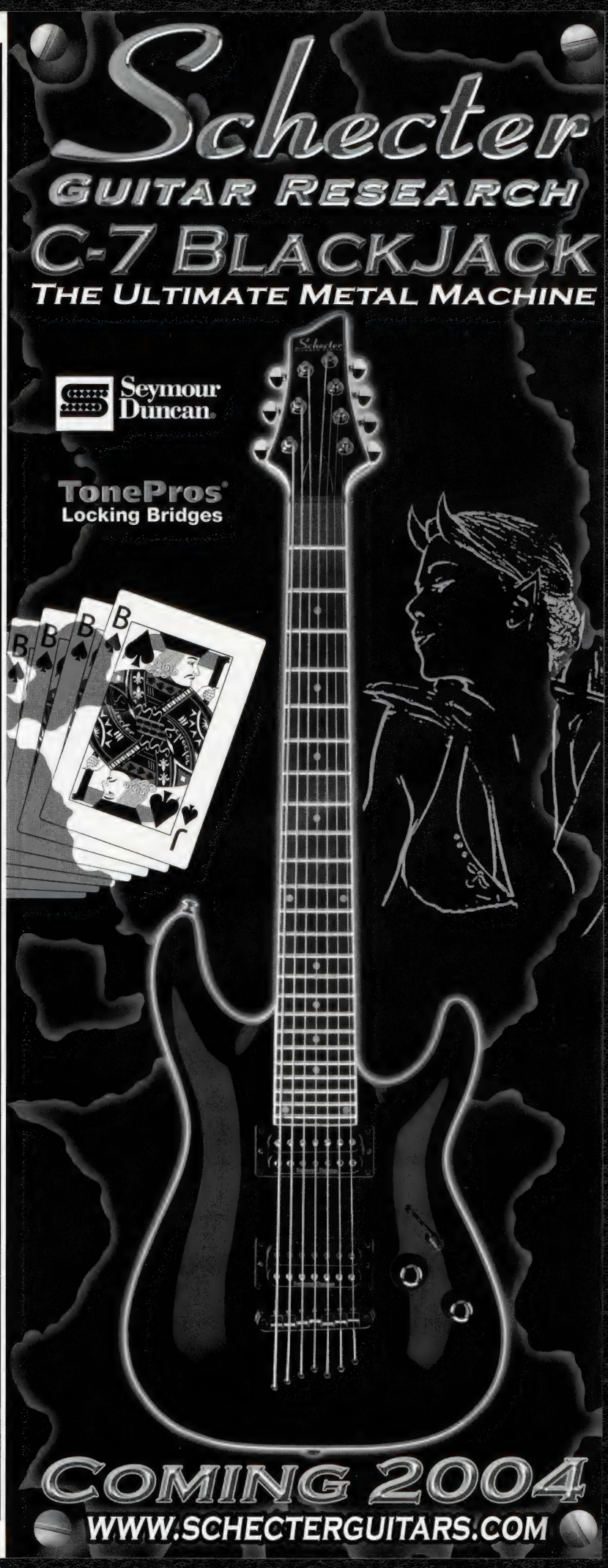
What do you strive for as a player?

I consider myself a pretty average guitarist but I think I've been able to create really offensive music with whatever my musical knowledge is, and the thing is I never took classes or went to school. After three or four years I realized that I was at a pretty cool level as a player but I wanted to improve. I didn't want to go to a teacher because I thought they would...

Change the way you think about playing?

Yeah! Like what happened with Chuck from DEATH. Of course he became a phenomenal player and I can see how he wanted to be more of a musician than a death metal guitarist, but personally I don't really like the newer DEATH stuff and I thought *Spiritual Healing* was kind of weak. After a few years I got into the record and it's good music, but it isn't DEATH. I think about that when I start thinking about improving my technique. I started to listen to more classical players and absorb something without copying them. Sometimes, when I write a riff, I don't care how technical it is or how hard it is to play as long as it comes from the heart. Believe me, I've heard a lot of really great guitarists out there who are doing nothing, playing in cover bands or bar bands. When I go to the music store, there's kids like fifteen or sixteen and they're shredding it makes me feel like shit because they play better than me, but then they start playing a METALLICA song. Of course they're just starting but, in time, if they don't create their own style, they'll just get lost and play in a band without personality.

END



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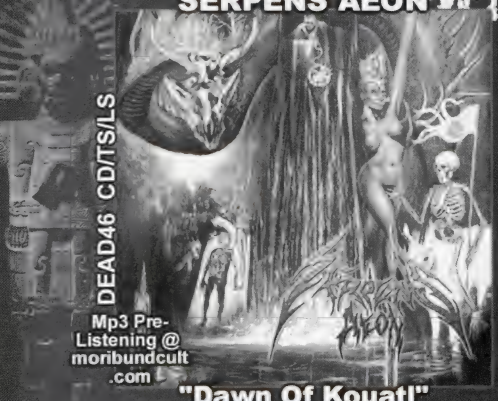

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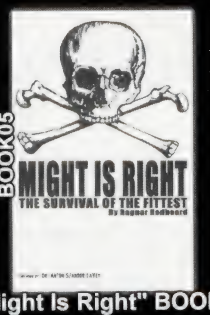

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WITH FULL FORCE

By Christopher Alo

With Full Force celebrated their tenth anniversary with another massive festival line up in 2003. WFF is certainly the most varied of the "metal" festivals in Europe. The bill features all styles of metal (including nu-metal) as well as punk, hardcore and all their bastard offshoots (pop-punk, screamo, etc.)

This is a European festival so there are certain things you need to keep in mind. Probably the most important thing to remember is to never sit down, anywhere. If you do, you will probably wind up sitting in a puddle of someone's urine. It's also a good idea to try and not give away the fact that you are a foreigner. American's in Germany are not nearly as popular as they should be.

First "must see" band of the festival is England's NAPALM DEATH. I hate to admit it, but I was never a huge NAPALM fan, but their last two albums have been amazing. New material like "Taste the Poison" and "Continuing the War on Stupidity" just plain rock. Now that Barney's hair is short and dark, he no longer looks like the long last son of SAXON's Biff Byford.

The "reunited" PRONG is next, but this reunion is really just Tommy Victor and some new players. They run through a set of all the PRONG standards like "Lost & Found." Victor, in his super baggy pants, looks overjoyed to be playing a show of this magnitude. They do play one song off their forthcoming album, *Scorpio Rising*. I'll be damned if "Embrace the Deaf" isn't totally in the vein of classic PRONG, albeit with some seriously low-end death metal vocals.

HATEBRREED are a long way from home, but America's biggest hardcore band has quite their share of fans overseas. Jamey Jasta might be small, but he makes a formidable front man. But when they launch into "I Will Be Heard" the audience turns into a dust cloud of slamming, drunken Germans.

SIX FEET UNDER vocalist Chris Barnes is pretty friendly off stage, but on stage his face paints a picture of pure intensity. He says very little between songs, as he seems extremely focused on the music. "Amerika the Brutal" and "Bringer Des Blutes" are the only new songs in the set. "Bringer Des Blutes" is the German language version of the title track of their new album, *Bringer of Blood*. Surprisingly, they do have time for a cover, which is their heavy, yet hysterical version of AC/DC's "TNT". I do spy Schmier from DESTRUCTION watching SFU's set but he goes through the crowd unnoticed.

Day One's headliner is SOULFLY. It's a very big deal because one of the headliners of day two is none other than Max Cavalera's former band, SEPULTURA. It's the first time that both bands will play the same festival since the split in 1997. This is certainly as big as if Ronnie James Dio fronted BLACK SABBATH played the same festival as Ozzy Osbourne in 1982. At least that's how it seems to me, being a big fan of the Brazilian masters. But try as I might, SOULFLY just doesn't do it for me. Max Cavalera seems to just delve deeper and deeper into nu-metal and South American tribalism, neither of which interests me in the least. He knows that his former band mates are playing the next night, so he does the unthinkable and plays three SEPULTURA songs! It's very interesting to see SOULFLY play their versions of "Attitude", "Refuse/Resist" and "Inner Self", but when it starts to rain, I head for higher ground.

ENTHRONED are up next. The Belgian black metal veterans show no mercy on blast beat anthems like "Spawn From the Abyss" and "Bloodline". No keyboards, synthesizers or female vocals here. With Corpespaint, spikes and leather and a fire-blowing vocalist, these guys are the real deal!

I've seen them a lot lately, but I just love AMON AMARTH. New songs like "Death in Fire" and "Versus the World" are just monstrous live, as are their old Viking-death classics like "The Last With Pagan Blood".

From the ashes of Norway's EMPEROR, rises ZYKLON, but it's a little different from what I remember last. At Milwaukee Metalfest 2001 ZYKLON still employed LIMBONIC ART's Daemon for handling lead vocals. He was extremely impressive, as a front man as he reminded me of a Norwegian Glen Danzig. Well, Daemon is long gone, and vocal reins have been taken over by bassist Secthdamon. He does an adequate job, but it's still somewhat lacking. Either way, "Core Solution" is a killer new track, as is "Zyklon Aeon," the title track off their latest release.

What can you say about MACABRE that hasn't already been said? There is no one else like them in the underground. When Corporate Death, Nefarious, and Dennis the Menace bellow out their chants of "Zodiac," you should know exactly what you are in for. But I am certainly taken back by their soft acoustic song "Mary Belle," as I've never heard the "lighter" side of MACABRE. "The Acid Bath Vampire" is due to appear on their new album, *Murder Metal*. That is, if it ever sees the light of day.

Two monk like corpse-painted figures carrying torches appear from stage right and left and walk to the front of the audience. I literally duck for cover when the two shapes spit fireballs only inches over my head, showering my shirt and camera in some sort of red flammable goo. It actually sets the stage for quite an incendiary live experience by the "cult" black metal act, 1349. SATYRICON drummer Frost is a machine behind his drum kit, hammering the snare on songs like "Evil Hour." But no matter where in the world you are and no matter how great the band you are watching is, there will always be some asshole somewhere yelling, "SLAYER" and Germany is no exception. Well my jaw nearly hits the ground when they charge through a cover of "Haunting the Chapel"!!! If that wasn't enough, they follow that with their cover of "Buried by Timer and Dust" by MAYHEM!! Pure blast beating necro black metal at it's finest.

Day Two and early on, is Sweden's ENTOMBED. They've been on a comeback swing the last few years and "Chief Rebel Angel" starts the festivities. "Retaliation" from their new album *Inferno* is slower and heavier and certainly an indication that their return to form continues. There's only one problem with the Swedes set, and that is that it's way too short. "Left Hand Path" closes their show and it totally kills!

ST. VITUS play a one-off reunion show for the German masses. Wino is back fronting the band, and their sludge like doom is a little faster than I remember the last time I played one of their

NAPALM DEATH

AMON AMARTH

ENTOMBED

HATEBREED

ZYKLON

MACABRE

albums. "White Magic/Black Magic and "Dying Inside" all sound better than I remember.

DESTRUCTION celebrates their 20th Anniversary with an explosive performance at WFF. Tons of pyro and flames are set off during songs like "Nailed to the Cross". Unfortunately they have guitar problems and show stops dead cold for more than five minutes. They fix it just in time for "Bestial Invasion" which features sparks that shoot some 40 feet in the air! Only at a fest Germany can you see a site like this!

SEPULTURA may have lost their original vocalist, but they are still going strong. Derrick Green fills Max's shoes to the best of his ability on "Slave New World" and "Troops of Doom". New tracks off *Roorback* like "Apes of God" are also very warmly received. SEPULTURA also pull out their versions of "Refuse/Resist" and "Attitude" and I think to myself, I wonder if Max is listening?

TYPE O NEGATIVE has really jumped forward by becoming headliners of this festival, closing out day two. The "drab four" are dressed in silly looking hospital gowns and they play in front of a backdrop of their latest album, *Life Is Killing Me*. Only one new track makes the set, "I Don't Wanna Be Me". The rest of the Brooklynites set is made up of their Goth anthems like "Black No. 1" and "Christian Woman".

Second festival for me this week, and it's the second time I'm seeing OVER KILL. New album *Killbox 13* is really quite good, but only "Devil By The Tail" gets aired. They have a short time, but they pull a few rabbits out of the hat like "Infectious" and "Hammerhead". They finish off with "Fuck You", but since we are in Europe, there is no dedication to Saddam Hussein or Osama Bin Laden.

STONE SOUR has quite the spot sandwiched in between two thrash legends. But the fast and furious "Get Inside" gets the dirty audience members attention. SLIPKNOT's Corey Taylor and guitarist Jim Root are certainly the most mobile of the bunch and certainly the most experienced with such a large crowd. Not sure if they are just spooked or tired, but the rest of the band seem to be kind of rooted on stage.

I consider myself very lucky every time I see SODOM live. That's because I know there are thousands of metal fans in America that will never get the chance. To see this band live on a massive stage with pyro cannons exploding is sure a sight to behold. Unfortunately they only have 45 minutes, but they squeeze in some gems like "The Saw Is The Law" and an ultra-fast "Blasphemer".

ANTHRAX certainly hasn't died, and live they totally prove that fact. "Caught In A Mosh" is played extremely fast, with the pauses in the song now almost eliminated. Vocalist John Bush pulls off his beanie cap to reveal his hairdo, matching guitarist Scott Ian. Now as much as I dig the band, and their new album *We've Come For You All*, I can't stand the fact that 3 of the 9 songs they play are covers. But I guess they can't get away from playing "Anti-Social" and "Got the Time". I could really do without "I'm the Man" even with Corey Taylor helping out!

Industrial kings MINISTRY take the stage right before the headliners. The sunglasses and cowboy hat are the same, but Al Jorgensen is a changed man since I saw him last. At the New York show, he was working on two speeds, slow and stop. But in Germany he is a fireball of energy. I forgot that "Just One Fix" has the guitar lead from "South of Heaven" in it; it's funny because SLAYER is on next. On "Supernaut", Scott Ian comes out to play guitar as well, but even with three guitars, the bass is way too loud in the mix to hear any of it.

Not much you need to say about SLAYER. More than 20 years in their career and they have become metal icons. And the older I get, the more and more I appreciate them. It is unfortunate that there is a major problem with the sound for the first few numbers. Luckily, everything is repaired by the time they get to "War Ensemble". More and more old songs keep getting put back into their set list the more that SLAYER stays on the road. This show is no exception as it includes a whopping six songs from *Reign In Blood* as well as classics like "The Antichrist" and "Haunting the Chapel". They rule and they are gods to be worshipped, plain and simple.

Within minutes of SLAYER's set ending on the main stage, the second stage is fired up to close the show. Up first is DORO, and I can literally smell her from a mile away. With an abundance of dirty ass German concertgoers, the aroma wafting off the former WARLOCK singer is absolutely intoxicating. She looks like she has put on a few pounds since the eighties (and who hasn't) but it actually suits her quite nicely. Looks and smells aside, the metal priestess still has it where it counts, the pipes. She sounds amazing on the classics like "Hellbound" and "I Rule the Ruins" which sit comfortably alongside her newer songs like "Fight". It's near impossible to snap a picture of the German beauty, as she is a real whirlwind on stage.

I love TYPE O NEGATIVE, but I think the reigning champs of the Goth-metal squared circle are MOONSPELL. The Portuguese dark lords play a healthy dose of new material of their latest release, *The Antidote* and songs like "In And Above Men" sound every bit as good as material off the classic *Irreligous* LP.

Now it's really late and after three days of metal, I'm nearly dead on my feet. But I'm thrilled to be able to see MY DYING BRIDE again. All it takes is a few of the big sweeping guitar riffs from Hamish Glencross and Ade Jackson to get me up like I've downed a few cups of espresso. I don't know what it is. I mean songs like "The Cry of Mankind" are totally depressing but I find it oddly exhilarating. A one-hour set of unparalleled doom/goth metal.

Last band of the festival falls to OPETH. The Swedes have a tough job on their hands, as I'm not the only person who is desperately in need of sleep. Thankfully, they forego their Damnation songs, as that would totally put everyone to bed considering the circumstances. Instead the progressive/death quartet has just enough time for their "regular" OPETH songs like "The Drapery Falls" and "Demon of the Fall." I would have like to say that I could've watched them all night, but by this time, it's physically impossible. But I was there until the very end, and that's what counts.

With Full Force has certainly become the little engine that could. While everyone sings the praises of Wacken Open Air (and rightfully so), the promoters of WFF have shown that Germany is big enough for more than one monster festival. I'm already looking forward to next year. END

OVER KILL

MY DYING BRIDE

ANTHRAX

SIX FEET UNDER

DORO

SLAYER

By Colin Davis

Featuring Gene Hoglan

Gene Hoglan is one of underground metal's pioneering drummers. He has been doing fast double bass since the late eighties when he was in DARK ANGEL from Los Angeles. Later he played in Florida's DEATH and went on to jam with TESTAMENT and now STRAPPING YOUNG LAD. Gene has always had a very prolific style that has been very influential in the scene. I had the privilege to talk with him after a STRAPPING YOUNG LAD show at The Pound in San Francisco one summer night.

Pit: Gene, when you were growing up, what music did you listen to?

Gene Hoglan: Well basically when I started listening to music it was the AM radio. Probably about 1969 to 1974, that time frame. It was popular music like the FOUR TOPS and stuff like that. From there, I got into more rock and roll, as I got older. Bands like KISS and CHEAP TRICK were really early influences. I remember wanting to be in a band like VAN HALEN when their first album came out. QUEEN and THIN LIZZY was my first concert. It was about that time that I decided I wanted to become a drummer.

What did your parents think of you being a drummer?

Well they never caught me! I was doing air drumming, playing on pillows in my bedroom. I had my custom sticks that looked like the drummer from FOGHAT's. I was 11 when I started that and was seriously thinking about drumming. From there I went to RUSH, UK and progressive stuff like Al Dimeola. As the double bass drummers started coming out, RAVEN, Tommy Aldridge, those early metal bands, I picked up those influences. At this point I'm 12 or 13 and had just been air drumming so much, memorizing RUSH records, that I had pretty much become a drummer with just my sticks, pillows and bedposts!

Wow. What do you practice in your spare time now?

Guitar! Yeah I play guitar, write songs. I started playing guitar about three years after I started drums. I mean I was writing guitar parts in DARK ANGEL. There was a time when I remember thinking I could keep up with most trash guitarists out there. So that's a big thing for me too. I figured that if I'm jamming with guitarists I should at least have a grasp of what they are doing.

Do you write guitar parts for the* STRAPPING YOUNG LAD *albums?

Yeah I do actually write some stuff. I really enjoy writing songs with this low alternate tuning that Devon tunes to. That's a lot of fun. It's a really melodic tuning.

What equipment are you using?

Actually the main kit I have always relied on is in Chuck Schuldiner's garage now. He bought it for the band and it's there now. I don't even have my own kit anymore! That one at Chuck's was a Pearl Custom Z. That was a really nice top-of-the-line maple shell kit from about 1993 or so. I know Sonny Emery was playing it at the time. Also Will Calhoun from LIVING COLOR was using that kit I remember. The one I used in DARK ANGEL was a Pearl MLX, which was from about 1989 and it was also a really nice kit. But now I'll play anything.

Do you have any endorsement deals?

Well I have a Sabian Cymbal deal and a Pro Mark stick deal but actually don't have a deal for drums. That's just one of those things I'm not so good at, you know, calling up and bugging companies for shit. And even if you get a good deal your still throwing out tons of cash to get the top of the line kit. I'll just wait for the band to sport me! Ha ha. My cymbals are all Sabian HHX line cymbals. They are amazingly light. Most are small and light and project really well.

Do you still carry around the M14 shell and boat prop and stuff like that?

Well yeah, the shell is up in Vancouver and the prop stayed back in Florida. I don't really have the cash to be throwing down fifteen hundred bucks for a fucking boat propeller!

Ever try Axis pedals?

Yeah I've tried them. And all the other things, like Iron Cobra and all that, but I'm still hooked on these old Camco pedals. They are like 22 years old or something. I could probably play faster with those new pedals, but I'd rather just push myself to the maximum on what I know.

These new death metal drummers play really fast with them, but I guess your music just doesn't call for that kind of super speed right?

No it doesn't really. But I'm totally amazed by these guys. Guys like Tony Laureano, Derek Roddy and all them. It's really amazing that they are actually doing it. Granted they play a little lighter but they are really doing it. People say 'can they do it live'? And yeah they can. You saw Tony in there doing it tonight. You know what I don't like though? Its all these black metal bands or whoever that actually replace whole sections of kick drums in the studio with Pro Tools or whatever. I mean, we replace a mistake here and there with **STRAPPING**, and that's cool. Everybody does that. But it's when you have to replace whole lines of hauling ass kicks because you just can't do it; that's where I draw the line. On the new album, that's all me. I want it to sound just like the studio when we play live.

Any new drummers that you have heard that you might call an influence?

Actually one new drummer that caught my ear was Chad Sexton with the *Grass Roots* album by 311. That is some really tasty shit man. It's really precise and tight. Maybe not the greasiest thing you ever heard in terms of really big sounding, but yeah, that was a favorite album of mine. That guy is great.

Do you have any other projects going on?

I have this band called the ALLMIGHTY PUNCH DRUNK that I play in too. We incorporate all kinds of stuff, dance hall beats, blast beats, all that. It's over the top metal. You can get it from Century Media or Heavy Devy or whatever. Check it out.

What's going on with DARK ANGEL? I heard there's going to be a reunion tour or something.

Well actually there was supposed to be a west coast tour but it had to be cancelled. We just couldn't get it off the ground logistically you know? It's tough for everyone to get all together and work it out with their jobs and families. Hopefully we'll be able to get all that together sometime soon and do that tour. Or do a European fest like Wacken or something.

So right now you're pretty happy with* STRAPPING *though, huh?

Oh yeah, its my favorite band in the world, I love the music. And I love touring. I started touring when I was 15 and it's really all I know. I love it.

What was it like working with TESTAMENT? Was it hard to play simple?

It was great working with them. I said I wanted to be a session drummer so I'll play whatever you want! There was a little push and pull there because Chuck Schuldiner always told me to go crazy, and Eric Peterson would be telling me to simplify. But it was good for me. I remember there were a few songs they wanted played to a click, so I just programmed my Alesis HR 16 drum machine to be playing the exact same parts I was going to play and I played live to that. It was a cool challenge. That's a cool click to play to right? The whole new **STRAPPING** is to the click too. I use this little Boss Dr. Rhythm and I just play to that. If there is a tempo change in the song I just go off the click and resume later after that part.

What kinds of things would you recommend for drummers to get their stamina and technique up?

Well really it's just practicing, but there are things you can do to hedge your bets while practicing. Like I use three-pound pound leg weights. I always just did double stroke rolls with the hands while kicking with the feet really fast and just do that forever. Now you've got stamina! I've always said drums are 90 percent mental 10 percent physical. It's your brain that trips you up and makes things hard more than anything. But yeah, I remember when I recorded the DEATH *Symbolic* album I had just lost like 120 pounds or something. I had incredible stamina!! And also worth mentioning is back when I was in DARK ANGEL, there was this one song called "Death is Certain, Life is Not", and everyone used to come up to me and say how cool they thought the bass drum patterns were and wondered how I came up with that. See, I had worked out this crazy kick pattern that was all broken and fragmented. Really it was just my way of playing fast cause I couldn't do the straight double bass at the time!

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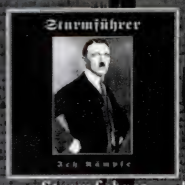

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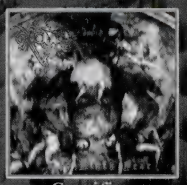

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ZYKLON

BY MICHA KITE — PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

SO YOU WANT TO PLAY IN A DEATH METAL BAND AND YOU THINK YOUR SHIT IS TIGHT? THE PROBLEM IS, THE ANTE IS STILL ON THE RISE, SO JUST WHEN YOU'VE GOT YOUR ALBUM HALFWAY RECORDED, THE MONARCHS KNOCK YOU BACK IN THE GARAGE TELLING YOU THAT YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER BAND ON THE CORNER OF EVERY BLOCK OF THE WORLD. LONGTIME **EMPEROR** SAMOTH HAS BEEN KNOCKING DICKS IN THE DIRT FOR OVER A DECADE NOW AND WITH THE **ZYKLON** SOPHOMORE RELEASE AEON, PREPARE TO TAKE A HIT.

Pit: You seem to revel in death metal more than with your previous work.

Samoth: Well not as directly as you put it. Obviously with EMPEROR we got more and more away from the original black metal sound and with **ZYKLON** I think there are elements of black metal, especially on the first album, but in general there isn't as strong of a black metal vibe on *Aeon*. We label it extreme metal as black, death and traditional metal or whatever influences us. If you look at "Prometheus" people talk about that as black metal, but its very progressive for the black metal genre. I think we pushed it as far as we could with that album.

Would you agree that this album is more focused than the first?

Yeah, we definitely had a lot more time to prepare things for this album and also the band has been together longer. We also have a new lineup that is working very well and we've been touring and that strengthened the tightness of the band. We're more experienced and I think we're closer to defining a sound for the band with this album.

What do you think about some of the bands that push the limits of music just for the sake of extremity?

If it works for that band then it works but for some bands it can end up being really boring. Some bands can blast from beginning to end and it works and with other bands its dull in my opinion. What we focused on with this album was to work with stronger variations between all the songs and create a stronger diversity in the sound. We still have some fast tracks but I also think we slowed down the tempo quite a bit. On average I would say the tempo is more mid paced and even a few that are quite slow, really heavy songs but who knows on the next one we might just take off again and blast through the whole album. I think we will always experiment with things. Like with the new album we have so many influences, which make it kind of open for us to bring in various elements and have a diverse sound, but I think the basis is metal. It's all about fucking metal and aggression and intensity and those are the realms that we'll keep working in.

Do you prefer to write alone or group collaboration?

We usually write separate. I'll write something at home and then bring it into rehearsal but Trym and myself work a lot together with him coming up with drum patterns and breaks. Sometimes I'll have a riff and a vibe and he will follow that or vice versa and I much more prefer that than setting home alone trying to chug out riffs. For this album we did some pre-production and recorded some sequenced drums and played around with some ideas, which made it easier.

I've read you collaborated with Faust again for this album?

Yeah, he wrote all the lyrics and he was working on them before we even started writing the music. He's pretty efficient that way (chuckles). He tends to write a lot about questioning society and religion and in general they're apocalyptic lyrics and the whole concept is about is apocalyptic madness.

Do you ever see yourself joining forces with him again now that he's paroled?

Well, he's supposed to play drums for DISSECTION and that's pretty much official. Jon is still in prison so that's some kind of lineup they have going there (laughter).

SUPERJOINT RITUAL

BY ERRIN KLEIN

"WE'RE A HARDCORE, HEAVY METAL FUCKING BAND"

Pit: Well, tell us about this band. We've had you in Pit before, and probably most people know the history behind the band, but just in case, let's refresh everyone's memory.

Phil Anselmo: We're a hardcore, heavy metal fucking band. And it is showing at all the shows that we the ones that are fucking making a difference and that kids are listening and they're fucking going apeshit, berserk. Tonight's a 21 and up show, which is very unfortunate, but that's how it goes.

I think this band is great because I grew up on hardcore, like AGNOSTIC FRONT and that sort of thing, and to hear the old-school hardcore come back is great. To expose that kind of music to a new generation of fans is great, too. I feel that this may be what old PANTERA would've gone for.

PA: … which one?

Cowboys from Hell is pretty hardcore.

PA: Really? I didn't really think that it was [so much.] I think *Vulgar Display of Power* is when PANTERA found their sound. But, this not being a PANTERA interview [laughs], I just don't see any similarity between PANTERA and **SUPERJOINT** much at all.

Well, I think that that people want to try to compare the two just because of the namesake.

PA: Well, and also the vocals. They're going to sound like me on both things, but I am doing different things as well, per record.

Joseph Fazzio: You have to be a pretty big fan to be able to know the big differences between the records. I think our guitar tones, our drum tones, our bass tones, even [Phil's] vocal qualities, everything is different.

PA: Because the guitar sounds and the bass sounds and the drum sounds in **SUPERJOINT** sound the way they do, my vocals are limitless to how loud they can actually go. However, with PANTERA, Dimebag had a type of guitar sound that the way he liked [to play], it swallowed up a whole lot of imperative things, vocals and bass. It swallowed up a lot of fucking things. And, I was never quite happy with that, but you know once again, I have no problem with the guys from PANTERA.

How did you come up with this idea? How did you come up with the members? How did you guys get together?

PA: Me and Jimmy had been talking about putting together a super-group, and I had met Joe a handful of times. We started going to see him practice. He'd come over and we'd jam, fooled around constantly. Then we kept fooling around and it started sounding crazy, and we were like, Damn! It was obvious that me and Joe and Jim, and fucking Kevin would be in there somehow, and at first, Kevin played bass. But, the whole point of **SUPERJOINT**, maybe at that point, its early juncture in '93, was to find us a different singer. I was sick of singing everything. I felt like I was singing, and in doing that, it all begins to sound monotonous, and that was the big trip with me, you know. And, we tried out five or six guys, and they all had their own style and stuff, but we all sort of looked at each other, and it just wasn't it. And when we went to demo, because I had an idea of the type of vocals [we should have], I had this vocal sheet, and was just screaming and shit… well, it pretty much just shed light on the fact that I was going to be the singer. And, we needed a bass player. And, hence, Joe and Hank … Joe can tell this story better than me…

JF: Yeah, Jimmy Bower was doing the same circuit as Hank, ran into him—Hank needed a drummer, and I wasn't doing anything at the time, so I went on the road with them for two years. And he had grown up listening to the same shit we did, he has the same influences—he's just a real dude… and he knows the road, and he knows our riffs, and gives 1000%.

PA: He's as solid as a fucking rock. From a musician's standpoint, I mean, I've jammed with some tight motherfuckers, and he is a tight motherfucker! And he is relentless, live.

JF: I've seen him do three-hour gigs. I've played three-hours gigs with him and, after we'd do that long-ass show, an hour and a half of country and an hour and a half of metal, he'd then come back on the bus and practice **SUPERJOINT** until six in the morning. He's just really into it.

PA: And when he came down, he sounded really fucking good; it was like, Ok, when do we start? We didn't have to even teach him any of the songs or anything.

How do you describe your second album—how is it different from the first?

PA: A lot more new, new, new songs. The first album was really comprised of old songs that we'd been doing since 93, and on demos and shit like that, and this record, we wrote songs right then, right there. They came across excellently, in my book.

Are you trying to influence anyone, or are you just doing what you like to do?

PA: That's kind of a weird question… I think I have influenced a whole shitload of fucking people, and I think that fucking it's up to **SUPERJOINT RITUAL** to get things back to order.

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THE LEGION

BY JAY GORANIA

Pit: Are you pleased with the final product,* Unseen To Creation, *which was filtered through Tommy Tagtgren's efforts?

Lars Martinsson: We are all satisfied with the final product. The production is fat, but not polished. It's large, but not blurry. Every detail in the music comes across clearly, without sacrificing the necessary "organic" approach to it. And on top of all that, it doesn't sound typically "Abyss." When playing such varied and complex music as we do, the production issue is not an easy task. The death metal sounding parts must sound fat and heavy, but as the musical expression shifts permanently, the black metal passages must have the right space and atmosphere. They are pretty much opposite registers to skip between. Working with Tommy was a very laid-back and comfortable way of recording. Even though we worked within abnormal time limits, we never felt stressed. Tommy is a great guy, combining social abilities with professional ones. Besides, he's the keeper of the unholy red wine Chateau D'Abyss – homemade, tasty and dangerous to both body and mind. We all came to know about that. Also, I think our days in the Abyss were cursed. Tommy told us he had never been forced to abort a recording session due to bad weather, or whatever, but we had to turn the equipment off several times during this one week because thunder was raging wild outside. Seriously, it was mysterious.

While I love the material in terms of composition, do you agree or disagree with my sentiment that the crunchy riffs, in particular, sound too thin? Couldn't the album have sounded more lethal had those effectively placed crunchy riffs been brought up front in the mix?

Since we have such a diverse spectrum of sonic expressions to deal with, one has to compromise a bit with the sound. Hence, some of the riffs maybe didn't have the exact crunch they'd need. But it would've sounded funny if we skipped between the levels within the songs.

***The new album's excellent cover art, synthesized by Kris Verwimp [who has provided cover art for MARDUK, IMMORTAL and ABSU], is morbid and well executed. Is the visual component of great importance to the overall impact of the* LEGION?**

Releasing a CD is not only about releasing the music you've created, but it's also a matter of giving the consumer "the whole package." Thus, the graphic aspect is of great importance. And it always has been. I mean, DARKTHRONE wouldn't have gained much popularity if they all looked like rednecks.

This also extends to the* LEGION*'s use of corpsepaint, I assume.

I don't call what we use corpse paint, since that label carries a certain value with it that we all can't agree with. I am more interested in looking like an authentic corpse on stage [which certainly does not come across very well in the booklet of the CD] than fulfilling some sort of sub-cultural heritage brought to life by SARCOFACO or MAYHEM or whoever. And, of course, our face paint appropriately gives our music a face.

Your drummer, Emil Dragutinovic, was enlisted to replace Fredrik Andersson in MARDUK last year. Have there been any scheduling conflicts?

Emil is able to combine the two bands smoothly since he's unemployed outside of drumming. So he can travel back and forth to Norrköping from Jönköping anytime he wants. Of course we have been forced to compromise a few times due to MARDUK's schedule, but it's not problematic. We get plenty of time to write material and reflect over our songs, while he gets lots and lots of practise from grinding his ass off every night when he's touring, rehearsing and recording with MARDUK. MARDUK is more straightforward, while the **LEGION** is far more technically advanced; and I think Emil enjoys and needs both. If we decide to record or tour with the **LEGION**, MARDUK respects that and arranges their schedule with our project in mind. So far, it has worked out well.

Does guitarist/founding member David Svartz write all of the material, or is the writing process more democratic than the liner notes indicate?

Svartz usually comes up with the riffs, which is the basis that we work from. If everybody likes it, we start to arrange it – add bass lines, different guitar stuff, drum beats, etc. We seldom start from the exact beginning of a song; usually we put separate parts together and maybe rearrange it twenty times before everyone is satisfied. Some songs demand a lot of work; others are finished quicker and without too much friction. It's a democratic process, I'd say. If everybody hates a part and David happens to love it, we'd skip it without discussing it any further.

For the* LEGION*, is black metal more about pure fantasy, or do the imagery and lyrics reflect deeper metaphors that outline a serious lifestyle?

I don't refer to us as pure black metal no matter what our label says, but I see your point in asking this. Maybe one of the reasons I don't call **LEGION** black metal is because we don't have this dead serious attitude towards our imagery and lyrics. And that's sort of the criteria if you deal with black metal, at least in my opinion. We don't claim our lyrics to be the one and ultimate truth, but those subjects that are dealt with represent possible truths to us. There are many influences including different religions, fictional books and horror movies. I'd never die for the views reflected in our lyrics, but I don't think that it's pure nonsense either. Fantasy…I don't know. I think I would need to die before I could tell you about the realities or fantasies held within our lyrics. It's also a matter of symbolism, of course. Maybe we don't exactly believe in a physical war against God, but we support those reasons for it displayed in the lyrics.

Unseen To Creation features some material that originally surfaced on the* Bloodaeons *debut demo and the* Awakened Fury *mini CD. If it's the case that some songs (i.e. "Knee-deep In Blood", "Retribution" and "On Swift Wings") have been reworked, would it be safe to assume that you're perfectionists, as most technical bands tend to be?

None of the older songs are rendered in any bigger meaning; it's more a matter of small, small adjustments that probably few people outside the band would notice. Some of us in the band tend to be perfectionists more than others. I think that some "filth" and "dirt" in the music doesn't hurt. I hate "perfect" music, which is usually boring and lacking in feeling. I think **LEGION**, at times, lies just at the border of having overly-pondered arrangements. A bit of healthy spontaneity is never a bad thing.

How has the band progressed since its debut demo, and what is the band working toward?

In the beginning it was pretty much only a cold black metal kind of sound. From there we've incorporated a death metal-like expression, mixing both styles to create something more unique and diverse. What lies ahead? I think it will be in the vein of the most technical songs on the album, but with the melodies being more integrated within the technicality rather than being put into sequences, like black/death/black/death and so on. Maybe there will be less speedy moments and more groove and heaviness compared to the average grinding frenzy displayed on this album. Time will tell, though. Only two new songs are written and they both sound very **LEGION**.

Are there any solidified plans for touring?

There will be a European tour this spring with IMPALED NAZARENE and INRI (Holland), but no dates are settled yet.

Do you have anything to say to your fans?

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THE HIDDEN HAND

BY MICHA KITE PHOTO BY ALEX LALIJ

"AND THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH..."

ALTHOUGH **RUSH** ORIGINALLY PENNED THIS LYRIC IN THE MID-70'S, IT SOLIDLY CONSTITUTES THE CAREER OF SCOTT WEINRICH. THEY SAY THE OLDER WE BECOME, THE PACE OF LIFE DECREASES. IN SOME CASES THIS MAY BE CORRECT BUT, COME HELL OR HIGH WATER, WINO HAS LIVED IT ALL AND IS NOT ONLY AT THE PEAK OF HIS MUSICAL CAREER BUT ALSO HIS SPIRITUAL CRUX.

Pit: It seems anytime you join or form a new band everyone wants to compare it to your previous efforts.

Scott "Wino" Weinrich: **THE HIDDEN HAND** is different from everything that I've done because it's encompassing a few different things. One is Bruce Falkinburg (bass and vocals) who is an enormous talent, and he wrote half **THE HIDDEN HAND** record as well as sang on half of it. He's an amazing intellect and we came together because he had recorded some SPIRIT CARAVAN stuff in the past. During the sessions, you develop a pretty close relationship with those people and I noticed right off the bat that we hit it off on a lot of things. We had a real meeting of the minds and when I saw him play I realized he could play his ass off. (The drummer) Dave's primary instrument is guitar and Bruce had heard him play drums and thought he was a really great and suggested he do something with them. When Dave first met me, he had never heard of me or any of my other bands. He wasn't born and bred on BLACK SABBATH and to me that was really interesting. When we get together we plug in and just jam for however long we feel like it and we found a lot of our songwriting ideas have come from those jams.

***And the* PLACE OF SKULLS?**

The music side of that band is a little more traditional doom, for lack of a better word. Now what sets **PLACE OF SKULLS** apart is the fact that this is mine as well as Victors first twin guitar endeavor. **PLACE OF SKULLS** and SPIRIT CARAVAN had toured together and that was the tour that I decided the guys in SPIRIT CARAVAN and myself wanted different things. About the time **THE HIDDEN HAND** started getting together, I got an email from Victor saying "look lets try and do this" and I gave it a lot of thought and said why not. The thing about *With Visions* that I think is cool is we didn't co-write that much material together but we worked off of each other's guitars into each other tunes. Neither one of us had ever done this before and I think it came out pretty cool. Lyrically **THE HIDDEN HAND** is more political / social and the **PLACE OF SKULLS** has the introspective "lets find a better way" vibe.

Why did you use* THE HIDDEN HAND *as a vehicle to promote public awareness?

Part of that is Bruce because we what we do is very thought out. People are screaming "they should have left politics out of it" but the bottom line is, I feel pretty frustrated in the sense of being a proud American citizen. Basically right now we're witnessing the subversion of democracy, and I don't care what anyone says about patriotism, but the true patriots are people like Greg Powell or Senator Robert Bird. I don't think anyone is going to say an AWOL military guy who used his family power to get out of military service really has any business standing up before this country and talking about patriotism. What we're trying to do with **THE HIDDEN HAND** is make people ask questions who have viewpoints, which are valid and need to be voiced.

***How do you compensate your beliefs with Victor's in the* PLACE OF SKULLS?**

I think Victor's message may have been a touch misinterpreted. I would say Victor's stuff is doomier than anything. Basically he believes in Jesus but doesn't call him by the name given in the bible, and him and Tim are Christians, so right away we had to agree to disagree. We decide to write good music and not dwell on these things but said let's talk about them. This isn't in reference to those guys but if you're going to talk to me about religion, and you're going to use the bible as your sole backup, then you're not going to get anywhere with me. I don't think the bible is reality because there is so many metaphorical references in there that if you're trying to talk to me about the bible, go all the way back to Sumeria because that's where it came from. I could go on and on but basically the Roman Catholics rewrote the bible and they're *still* doing it today! I mean come on, the Vatican is like the Mafia and that's been evident with all the sex abuse stuff that's going on. If you're going to talk to me about religion, lets talk about the Sumerians, the Dead Sea scrolls or the book of Enoch. You can't wave the New Testament at me and say, "I'm right because the New Testament says so." People should make their own decisions from their own research and not from what they were brainwashed by five years ago. I mean how can a human put divinity in perspective you know?

A lot of folks believe you've worked hard in this industry while reaping little reward...

After THE OBSESSED had broken up and I was wondering around in crazed behavior and I went to see a friend and he had some literature on the Chinese horoscope. I already knew that I was born in the year of the rat and the rat isn't looked upon as a negative by the Chinese, but as a survivor and is cunning, and my birthday broke it down even further to the rat on the beam. This is the rat that sits in the rafters surveying everything and at the time I didn't feel that in control, but the most important thing is what it said. One of the descriptions of the traits was you make a big impact and you make a big difference in the world for a lot of people without realizing it. You have to gain your self-fulfillment, which should come from the fact that you've changed lives in a positive way and it doesn't necessarily mean you've been compensated with bags of gold. How do you define success? I define success as people like my music and it helps them and is an inspiration. The energy that people give off from that is fulfilling for me and lately that has translated into some modest royalties.

SOUTHERN LORD

PLACE OF SKULLS

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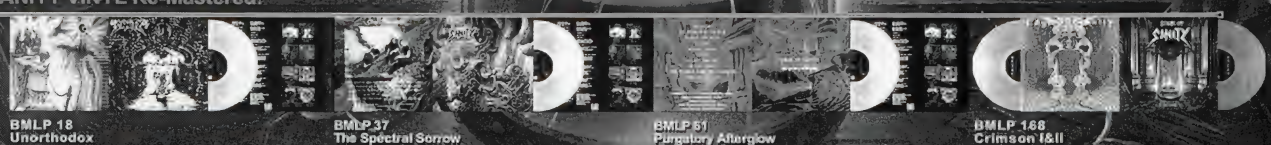

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SEPULTURA

BY JAY GORANIA **PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE**

Pit: The limited edition of the new CD includes* Revolusongs, *the (recent) EP of covers. Listening to the EP makes me think that you chose songs that people wouldn't expect* SEPULTURA *to be covering.

Derrick Green: That was the main reason. For us to do a metal cover is the easiest thing to do. That's what we play: very heavy music. So it was more interesting to do something with different types of bands that really influenced us, that revolutionized the way that we hear music. We did a wide variety and it was cool to challenge ourselves to do something different like U2 or MASSIVE ATTACK. I know that playing them live has been a great response.

(Regarding) your hardcore roots, what specific bands did you like when you were younger? Were there any metal bands that you liked?

There were only a few metal bands that I liked. There was CELTIC FROST, VENOM and METALLICA. Hardcore bands: MINOR THREAT, CROMAGS, SICK OF IT ALL, AGNOSTIC FRONT, NEGATIVE APPROACH, YOUTH OF TODAY. I didn't drink beer until I was 19 or so. I was pretty straightedge as a kid in high school and I really liked the energy of those bands. It was incredible to go to all those shows, like BAD BRAINS in their prime. And I got to play with a lot of bands that I really idolized at the time. So it was a great experience for me.

What do you think of today's heavy music scene?

There's a band called MASTODON that's really great that I saw play in Belgium at a festival. There's new hardcore bands that are fucking great: HOPE CONSPIRACY, EVERYTIME I DIE, CONVERGE, ISIS. There are so many new crazy bands. It's pretty exciting for me because I've been in Brazil for so long. When coming back, I just started thinking, 'Thank God it's not dead!"

Nation *was obviously a concept album touching upon the ideal aspects of what life can be. In today's world, how do you view the world as falling short of that standard, and how is that addressed in* Roorback?

Well, I think on this album there's definitely a lot more aggression that's coming through. On *Nation* I think the approach was the complete opposite – having that idea that humanity can do something for itself to make itself better. I truly believe that still, but I think in the time period that we're in that it's definitely pretty hectic and scary for a lot of people. People are just in complete fear and there's good reason to be. I mean this country has a lot of problems. And the world's politics are pretty intense, especially now with the US government blatantly doing whatever the hell it wants. But nobody really cares. Nobody's touching what's really going on. People just sort of let it happen. So these guys who are in power right now are pretty much doing what they want to do and just raping the entire country of tons of money, just looting it. And they're being blatant about it. And that's what the scary thing is. A lot of people are hooked up with "American Idol" and they want to watch reality TV. They're fixated on that but they aren't watching what's really going on. It's interesting because I definitely have a different view from living on the outside in Brazil, seeing the news, and reading a lot of different books and publications that weren't able to be published here in America, just for the fact that these major companies that run all the media and everything wouldn't run them because they wouldn't make any money. There's a lot of risk and it's too much for them. I'm really upset with the way things are going here. I really want to express that in the music that we do - the anger. But we're really not (trying) to persuade people to pick sides, like Republican or Democrat. We just want people to really think about what's going on and try to understand what's happening.

Do you think that the public is at fault for not being aware due to its complacency, or is it more that the government is being too controlling?

Actually, the government itself is almost a corporation of many different corporations. These people that are in power have these different corporations or CEOs of different corporations at their side. It all comes back to putting a lot of people in fear and trying to get them to consume. So when you have everybody in fear, the Bush administration is like, "We'll provide you with safety. We have code orange alert," and bullshit like that. And people start to believe that. They're like, "It's code orange. We have to duct tape the windows." That shit works and makes people totally afraid. And if anyone speaks out, it's just like, "Oh, they're a traitor!" It's the same thing that the Nazis did. "This guy's a traitor because he's not patriotic. Blah, blah, blah. He doesn't believe in what we're talking about." It's totally ridiculous, but it's true. And these commercials are nonstop running, trying to sell you tons of shit constantly in between this media blitz of fear. It's insane! Consume. Consume. Fear. Fear. And it's going to end up exploding in people's faces after a while because people don't have the money to consume anything. People aren't working. They're out of jobs. That's a big problem. And people are going to realize, "Wait a minute. How come I'm out of a job?" These are real issues that are happening in the US. It's not just, "Let's go to Iraq." It makes some other people rich in our government. People are going to start to realize it when they're out of a job and there's no retirement or anything like that. But now we see the fixation of "American Idol" and all that bullshit TV that's on MTV. People eat that up.

How do you think* SEPULTURA *has changed by having you in the band?

Before, it was very one-dimensional as far as vocals go. They weren't able to do songs like these covers, or songs with a melody in the vocals or something like that. Now it opens up a whole new gate for us to work and do something really creative, where people don't get burned out from the same screaming and yelling throughout a song. We can venture and do different things *and* have that intensity of **SEPULTURA**. Creating different moods makes it a little more interesting. And for me, it would also be cool for us to work on more soundtrack type stuff - to actually score music for a movie. Possibly we could do that. I think with me as the frontman, we have that option of doing various things that don't necessarily have to do with just screaming.

And Andreas has his classical background to draw from.

Exactly! And that makes it all the more powerful. With that background, and also with Igor being able to play any type of music, it really adds to our potential.

Did you play any guitar on this release?

Yeah. That's one thing that I really got into. I was just picking it up, writing riffs and showing them to Andreas to fix up here and there. So now when we play, I play a lot of the new songs on guitar. That's something different with the new live show. I don't want to play the whole show. I like definitely changing it up.

What does* SEPULTURA *mean to you?

For me, it's almost like a way of life: to really do what you want to do - to really live your life to the fullest and not hold back anything. I definitely try to do that everyday. Really, just keep searching for new things constantly. Search for knowledge and just make a better person of yourself in whatever you do.

AS DUSK SETS, ABHORRENT WINGS SPREAD ABOVE MOTHER EARTH, ENSHROUDING HER IN ALL THINGS BANEFUL. IN THIS SPLENDOR, THE ACCURSED EMBRACE INDIGNATION AND DAMNATION FOR THEY ARE THE CHILDREN OF CAIN, THE INFERNAL FATHER, AND LILITH, THY SERPENTINE MOTHER. FOR EVERY EIGHT DAYS OF LIGHT COMES ONE OF DARKNESS, AND IT IS THEY THAT CHALLENGE THE ARRIVAL OF A WORLD BASKING IN THE "DEATH CULT ARMAGEDDON".

The angels weep as the council announces a call to arms. "For this album we recorded three rhythm guitar tracks instead of four, which helps the music breathe and it doesn't get so muddy. There are also several keyboard tracks on top of each other in addition to the orchestra, so that's a lot of stuff to be mixed down. The more you record on top of each track, the more difficult it gets to mix. We had two orchestral outtakes on two of the songs, which are bonus tracks on the double LP, and those alone sound like they're from a movie."

Rome wasn't destroyed in a day and the master of ceremonies doesn't always have an easy task at hand. "Gaute Storaas is like a Norwegian celebrity and he's the same person we used on the last album. His music is classically oriented, obviously, but he's also kind of a freak, so he helped us out again and he worked more on the arrangements knowing we would use a much bigger orchestra. It was actually his idea to go to Prague and record because of price and quality. We used almost fifty people from the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, as opposed to fourteen we used on previous albums, and that's a big step forward. We also used a full horn section, which helps add that soundtrack feeling. We recorded everything in one or two days and then took those tracks back to Sweden. We had to time stretch and edit some of the stuff because some of it was actually out of tune. Later we found out that parts of songs sounded better with keyboards instead of orchestra bits, so we ended up using a little bit of both. When Abbath (IMMORTAL) came to the studio to do guest vocals he said, "fucking hell, it sounds like the new Star Wars movie or something". I think that's a compliment because, as far as I'm concerned, black metal is all about atmosphere. If you create atmosphere, it doesn't matter how you do it as long as you get to the point, and I think that's something we've always done."

In battle, the sounds on the field are of mixed emotion. Everything from bloodlust to jubilation can be heard. "The places that Vortex sang on this album seemed perfect. We didn't feel it was necessary to do more because, after all, we do consider ourselves a black metal band and we have to be careful not to use the clean voice too much, as it has to be a balance and a contrast to the grim vocals. Since we don't have much of the clean vocals, I think they enhance each other as vocalists. To me it's a perfect blend."

Combining militant precision with malignant intelligence, presentation is half the battle. "The video for "Progenies" was our first professional video clip. We had some in the past, and some made by the record company without us even knowing about them. This time we were in charge and we had a lot of help from Patrick Ullaeus, the director who has his own film company in Sweden. He's done rock videos with budgets in the millions and it was a very expensive video to make but he did it out of his own spare time because he was so into the music. I think it helps to have a director who is into the music and, although he charged a lot of money, he did it because he wanted to. I guess it will recoup in one way or another but, if we're going to do a video, we are going to do it good and not save any cash to put in our pockets. We would rather spend it on a proper video. There aren't that many rock videos that have a concept and usually you just see band members playing, and we do that too, but we have somewhat of a concept that is connected to the layout of the album. It was cool to be sort of an actor in your own film."

At the end of the day what does it all mean and is the bloodshed really worth it? "The term black metal is limiting and it's very watered down. Now days any band can call themselves black metal and the kids don't know the difference. We've always been more than a black metal band but, since we describe ourselves as such, it has to have the roots and traditions from the past, which we take to the next level. We play our version of black metal and that's how it is."

NUCLEAR BLAST AMERI

"FUCKING HELL, IT SOUNDS LIKE THE NEW STAR WARS MOVIE OR SOMETHING".

DIMMU BORGIR

BY MICHA KITE

I SWEAR, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE WATER IN SWEDEN. THE NUMBER OF GREAT BANDS COMING OUT OF THAT COUNTRY IS STAGGERING. THEN WHEN YOU ADD ALL THE MULTIPLE SIDE PROJECTS THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL BAND MEMBER IS IN, THE NUMBER OF GREAT SWEDISH ACTS BECOMES LIMITLESS. BUT SURELY ONE OF THAT COUNTRY'S BEST EXPORTS ARE **ARCH ENEMY** (EVEN IF THEIR SINGER IS GERMAN). THEIR 2001 RELEASE WAGES OF SIN (WHICH WASN'T RELEASED IN THE STATES UNTIL 2002) WAS UNANIMOUSLY HAILED AS A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE MELODIC SWEDISH DEATH METAL BAND. WITH NO TIME OFF AT ALL THEY QUICKLY RECORDED AND RELEASED THE FOLLOW-UP, ANTHEMS OF REBELLION. THIS NEW ALBUM BLOWS AWAY ALL THEIR PREVIOUS RECORDINGS AND WILL CERTAINLY TOP MANY YEAR-END LISTS, INCLUDING MY OWN. I SPOKE TO VOCALIST ANGELA GOSSOW AND GUITARIST MICHAEL AMOTT ABOUT THEIR NEW ALBUM, THEIR TOUR WITH **SLAYER** AND THE SIDE PROJECTS FOR BOTH OF THEM.

ARCH ENEMY

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

Pit: The new album* Anthems of Rebellion *is just amazing. Andy Sneap produced it and did a really fantastic job.

Michael Amott: We used Frederik Nordstrom for four albums. We just felt the time was right to move on. Andy Sneap had mixed *Wages of Sin* and we were very impressed with the mix and with the way he worked. When the time came around to do this new album, Andy Sneap was at the top of our list. He was really up to do it because he doesn't get to do many albums by bands that are in our style. It was really a match made in hell (laughs).

The songs on* Anthems of Rebellion *seem to be more aggressive, yet catchier.

Angela Gossow: It just happened because it is more of a team effort. There's more of a band vibe nowadays. Everyone has different tastes in the band. People have accused us of selling out and they are blaming it on me, but I don't even write any of the music (laughs). I'm totally into the fast death metal shit myself and I'm planning my own project.

So what is your project going to be?

AG: It's going to be old school death metal. It's going to be like OBITUARY, old MORBID ANGEL, old ENTOMBED and DEICIDE. Actually I'm going through a phase of listening to lots of old shit at the moment. It's not about making money at all; it's all about a band where people are not hopping up and down to the music (laughs). It's just about having some fun and some of this stuff is too extreme for **ARCH ENEMY**. It's going to be two female singers actually.

So who will be the other singer?

AG: Rachel from SINISTER. I think about doing double vocals all the time like old DEICIDE. Like she would do the low-end shit and I would do the high shit.

Do you have a name yet for this project?

AG: I'm thinking about DEAD BY DAWN that is an old DEICIDE song.

Right, from the first album. So who else will be in DEAD BY DAWN?

AG: I hope I can get some **ARCH ENEMY** members because they are best instrumentalists that I know.

Will Michael play guitar?

AG: Yeah, but I want to write the music. It will hopefully come out next year, if I make it through to next year (laughs).

Would there be two guitarists in this project?

AG: I don't know. I have a lot of contacts so I know a lot of people. But I've been in contact a lot with Rachel and we are very good friends. She sounds great and she is a very great person to deal with and that's important to me.

So how was the SLAYER tour?

AG: It was very good. We got exposed to a lot of people that weren't **ARCH ENEMY** fans. I can see a lot of surprised faces. We got a lot of feedback on our website about people saying that they had never heard of us before, but that we ripped live, so that was great.

MA: It was a huge honor for us to be out there playing with those bands. Especially SLAYER, we all grew up listening to that band. Everyone says that, it's almost a cliché at this point (laughs). But it felt good. I bought *Hell Awaits* as a kid in 1985 so it felt weird to be on the road with them.

SLAYER fans are probably the toughest crowds to play for. Were you pleased with their reaction?

MA: Reaction was good and it was a lot better than I expected. I think we have that sort of quality where we are sort of brutal enough to appeal to the SLAYER fans. And we're not going out there with dreadlocks in our beards trying to be SOULFLY or something. I think people know that we are not faking it. Our music has a European flare to it and it has an aggressive edge. But it's not power metal or anything. People are so fucked up and drunk that maybe they just want to hear something fast (laughs).

AG: We played shows with IRON MAIDEN and we went over pretty well with their crowd as well. I think it's because we are sort of thrashy and it's really aggressive and in your face. It's not like hardcore or nu-metal or power metal with a gay singer. It's more like SLAYER, so it's acceptable for their crowd. IRON MAIDEN crowds like a lot of the guitar melodies. It's very pure metal. And the SLAYER crowd and the IRON MAIDEN crowd are very much into pure metal; they are not into the trends.

Angela's vocals on the new album are much clearer.

MA: I think it was something we studied a long time on. I think when you have extreme vocals in death metal; usually the vocals are very unclear. Usually it's a growl but you can't really hear the words. I thought it would be cool if we tried to get as much clarity as possible in there while still keeping it extreme. A lot of people find death metal unlistenable because they can't understand the words. If it's just growling, some people can't relate to it. I worked on getting the vocals really clear and Andy really helped us out with that.

Christopher did some clean vocals on this album. Is this something that we might see more of?

MA: Oh yeah, we sold out (laughs). Actually he did a project on his own where he did clean vocals. We heard it and liked it so we decided to incorporate it.

I think it fit quite well.

MA: It's different for us (laughs). I don't know if we would use it again in the future, but it was fun. Angela's vocals will always stay extreme.

So Angela won't be doing any clean vocals anytime soon?

MA: No. Personally, I don't want to hear that, to be honest. I think it's cooler that she has a more aggressive edge to her vocals. I'm kind of tired of the angry vocal mixed with the melodic vocal. We did it a little bit different with Christopher's parts. It added some texture so it was cool. We don't really care what box people want to put us in. We've never been a pure death metal band and we're certainly not a nu-metal band. We're doing some kind of extreme metal for sure. We're all huge metal fans and we've all been playing it for years. I don't know if you need the term for genres anymore.

So what is the status of SPIRITUAL BEGGARS?

MA: I do that on the side because **ARCH ENEMY** has become such a fulltime commitment. I still love it because it lets me write and create in such a different style. We did an album last year and we did a five week tour in the spring in Europe and Japan.

I would love to see SPIRITUAL BEGGARS play in the States. Wasn't there supposed to be a live album?

MA: Yeah we recorded some stuff in Japan for a live album. And we filmed stuff for a DVD that we might do as well.

So the band is on the backburner for now?

MA: Yeah, but I've written some new songs. I've written nine new songs already for the next album. I just have to keep going. I haven't had a normal job for years and years so I just keep going.

CENTURY MEDIA

MEATJACK

BY JADD SHICKLER

FURIOUS, ANGULAR BLASTS OF COMPULSION AND MADNESS, GARGANTUAN RIFFS THAT BURN AND GRIND, AGONIZED LAMENTATIONS AND HORRIFIC SHRIEKS; **MEATJACK**'S NEW ALBUM DAYS OF FIRE LIVES UP TO EVERYTHING SAID OF THEIR 1999 DEBUT, TRUST. TOWERING LUMINESCENCE AMID THE DROVES OF SINGLE-NOTE SCREAMERS IS THEIR ACUTE AND UNEXPECTED USE OF MELODY, DARKLY BEAUTIFUL, INSPIRING AND FULL OF DAMNATION.

Pit:* MEATJACK *has been around for a decade, but this is only your second album, coming four years after the last one.

Brian Daniloski: We'll sell no wine before its time. We used to need all band members present before we could start doing things, now we each go home with our guitars and come in with ideas. Things are a lot more fruitful now than they used to be. It was also goofier in the old days, like when we first started getting proficient on our instruments, it was, "hey, look what I can do", rather than, "is this a good song?" wacky time signatures and whatever. It just wasn't fully realized.

Jason Daniloski: But we always had the dissonant angle going, noisy.

What do you think about the NEUROSIS comparisons?

BD: We've gotten a lot of that, especially back when we used to do projections behind us when we played. Sight-unseen, people would say, "oh yeah, they're a NEUROSIS band." We always had that SABBATH element to what we did, doing kinda slow stuff, but then we heard THE MELVINS and BUZZOVEN, and hearing those bands we went, "wow, we can get *really* slow."

Jason Daniloski: But we were doing our thing before anyone actually turned us onto NEUROSIS or TODAY IS THE DAY... people asked, "have you heard of these bands?" and at the time we hadn't.

Musically, are these towers of aggression written to vent or express negative emotions?

JD: I think it's actually really pretty. I don't think of it as angry or negative or teen angst.

BD: We're trying to pull back and get a more rounded out vision, its not like every riff has gotta be as dark and evil as possible. A problem with a lot of bands today, they have 'a sound'. You go back and listen to any ZEPPELIN album and they've got a whole variety of moods and emotions. We miss that a lot of bands aren't doing that today, so we're trying to get more into the ZEP way — it's creeping into our sound and attitude and life in general.

The use of melody in combination with aggressiveness, especially in the vocals, makes things extremely dynamic.

JD: It's something that happened naturally. Our earlier stuff was really noisy; there wasn't much singing to be had on top of what was going on. Now it's more riff-oriented so we can actually sing a vocal line over it and it's not so chaotic.

BD: We have different approaches to what we do instrumentally, as do many bands that are lumped into our genre, but a lot have that guy who screams one note through the whole thing. As many different ways I'm approaching the guitar, that's how we should be approaching any instrument we're playing including our vocals.

Days of Fire conjure a slew of primal, dreamlike imagery. The song "Crawl" for example, almost sounds like a funeral theme...

BD: That was pretty intentional, you got the point. It was meant to sound like a funeral march.

JD: Thematically, *Days of Fire* represents the trials of life. Life can be beautiful and life can be ugly. Lyrically, the song "Days of Fire" makes that point. For me it's all about fire, the sun, the ocean and numbers like one million...

BD: I consider myself somewhat of a craftsman on my guitar, but sometimes I just feel like, "what am I doing lyrically"? My early lyrics were very "I'm so mad about stuff." Now I'm trying to pull back and leave it open. I'll be driving down the road and two lines will pop into my head, or just a word or something and it goes into this scrapbook. Then, when I'm ready to add lyrics to a song I put all the scraps in front of me and join things together. It's interesting to see what it becomes.

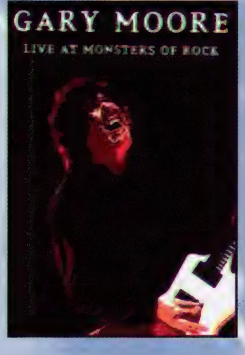
MEATJACK's new album,* Days of Fire, *is available in September 2003 from At A Loss Recordings. Also check out their 1999 album,* Trust, *a trove of singles and EPs including a split 7-inch with BONGZILLA, and a forthcoming appearance on a tribute to THE MELVINS alongside MESSHUGGAH, NEUROSIS, HIGH ON FIRE, and others.

LIVING IN THE PAST

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

MOTORHEAD

The biggest release comes from MOTORHEAD. It's titled *Stone Deaf Forever*, and it's a five disc retrospective. Now, you may have a problem saying it's another MOTORHEAD box set. It sure is, but this one definitely looks the best, and basically has everything you need. This appears to be done with the full cooperation of the band. Let me break it down for you, so you know what you're getting. Disc one covers recordings from 1973 to 1980. It begins with song MOTORHEAD done by the HAWKWIND (Lemmy's band at the time). It goes through all early essentials from the beginning of MOTORHEAD. The real treats are BBC's Peel Sessions recording from 1978. When listening to the first disc one cannot help but to witness the transition and progress of this band. You are able to see how MOTORHEAD became what it is today. The second disc highlights 1980 to 1986. It opens with "Ace Of Spades", and things only get better from then on. Again, there are some cool rarities like the BBC sessions, or the Headgirl pairing. Disc three starts from 1987 and stops in 1996. This disc represents a time that, in my opinion, didn't get its just dues. This is your second chance to check out how great these recordings were. Afterwards you should go to your local record store, and buy all of the albums respectfully. Disc four brings us to the present time. It covers from 1996 to 2002. Again the choice of the tracks is excellent. Everything that should be there is there, some rarities, but not as much as on the previous discs. Disc five is a live set, and it covers concert highlights from 1978 to 1999. In my opinion this should be a double or even triple disc set. When it comes to being on stage, MOTORHEAD delivers like no one else. The choice of tracks is still very interesting, and it supplements the entire box set well. On the average, each disc contains about twenty tracks, so there's plenty of music to enjoy here. There are some very cool extras with this set. One highlight is the 60-page booklet, featuring plenty of photos, memorabilia, and all the good stuff that collectors search for. There is also a poster, and some informative writing about the band. The packaging is excellent. Out of all the MOTORHEAD boxed sets this one is by far the best looking. This collection is great for someone who is new to the band because it has just about everything you need to have to get started. It's a great compilation for the diehards like myself, because it has all sorts of rarities, extras, and is definitely presentable. I feel that just about everyone would find something here they like. This is the definitive MOTORHEAD compilation, and the best part about it is that the band is not done yet, so there are more great moments to come from Lemmy and the boys. *Stone Deaf Forever* could a great Christmas gift, and who's to say you can't get some head during holidays.
Contact: www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com



GARY MOORE

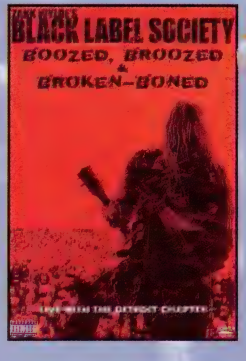
Gary Moore has a DVD out from his recent Monsters Of Rock performance. This maybe the only chance to see Gary Moore on stage as he rarely ever visits U.S. these days. This release proves that Gary Moore is still an excellent guitar player, who delivers the goods when required. The DVD includes sound check and interviews. All in all you see everything, the preparation, the performance, and you even get to hear and see what he has to say. Also, let's not forget to mention that the material is a lot more upbeat here than the last blues records released by Moore. He brings out the classics.
Contact: www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com

TRIUMPH

TRIUMPH has a live DVD and a CD out. Both come from one source. The recording dates back to 1983 when the band performed at the US Festival. The DVD includes the footage, some video clips, recent interviews with the band members, and a documentary about TRIUMPH. It is very nicely put together, and a real treat for all TRIUMPH fans. The CD has the soundtrack of the performance. There's a limited version of the CD that includes a 25-minute DVD of the performance. I suppose that's for the diehard collectors only. When you get the DVD and the CD you should be set in your TRIUMPH quest. There are two more TRIUMPH DVD advertised in the booklet, so get ready for more.
Contact: www.triumphmusic.com

HELLFEST VIDEO

Hellfest 2002 is an official video documentary of the festival of the same name. This is a two DVD set, and it's very long. It includes 27 bands. Some of the more known names are: HATEBREED, LAMB OF GOD, MERAUDER, BURNT BY THE SUN, and many more. In addition to the music there are plenty of band commentaries and interviews. This release is a great document, highlighting a musical movement represented by the times we live in. Underground all the way, you just have to support it.
Contact: www.highrollerstudios.com



ZAKK WYLDE

Zakk Wylde's BLACK LABEL SOCIETY had released some good albums but, this time around, it's their first DVD. This is a proper release because BLS is strictly a live band and this concert is no exception. The band just owns the stage. The DVD is packed with extras such as interviews, video clips, behind the scenes footage, and more. It's a great package for all Zakk Wylde fans.
Contact: www.eaglerockent.com

LIMP WRISTS & BLOOD

By Jim Mills

PRINCE OF PERSIA

"The Sand Of Time"

Ubi Soft

ANOTHER game making its debut to the 3D world is **PRINCE OF PERSIA**. If you remember the classic 2D version of **PRINCE OF PERSIA**, it was one of the bloodiest games to hit the shelves. It enthralled you for an hour, making you sword fight, solve puzzles, use strategies, all to save your beloved princess who is about get her bell rung by some other Persian hunk.

How is **PRINCE OF PERSIA** going to make the much-needed jump into the 3D world of gaming? Here's how. First Ubi Soft made amazing looking worlds. Ancient Persia looks and sounds incredible. **PRINCE OF PERSIA** "The Sands of Time," captivates you as you venture through each level and fighting sequence. It does not allow you to get bored playing, in fact it may move too fast, because you want to see everything that the level has in it due to amazing graphics and sounds.

PRINCE OF PERSIA "The Sands of Time" has also brought a new feature to these 3D style games; you can run on the fucking walls! That's one of the ways that Ubi Soft made **PRINCE OF PERSIA** "The Sands of Time" a step ahead than the 3D games in the market right now. If you're in a battle against five fat Persian guards, run on the wall behind them and stab them six or seven times. The play control is smooth, the fighting is smooth, and the graphics and sounds are AMAZING.

PRINCE OF PERSIA "The Sands of Time" is an addictive mind blowing game that will force you into hours and hours of playing. If you dig these 3D style games or you like NILE then **PRINCE OF PERSIA** "The Sands of Time" needs a spot in your collection.

Ubi Soft: www.ubi.com

CASTLEVANIA

"Lament of Innocence"

Konami

I don't know where to start with this game. How do you begin a review of a series that has been ongoing and consistent with making the best video games since the late 80's? **CASTLEVANIA** for NES was amazing. **CASTLEVANIA** "Bloodlines" for Genesis was amazing, and then you get up to **CASTLEVANIA** "Symphony of the Night" for PS1, which is one of the best games ever. How can Konami maintain the legacy of **CASTLEVANIA**? Well, first off they got the same

team that did "Symphony of the Night." That's a good start. Then they used the same composer for "Symphony of the Night," which is another plus. Then all you have to do is use the technology for 3D games, and BOOM. Instant classic. **CASTLEVANIA** "Lament of Innocence" keeps the traditional vibe of all its predecessors with the dark spooky themes. You still have the classic enemies that you have grown to love over the years: Bone Throwers, the fucking Bats, vomiting corpses, devilish dogs, Axe Armors, Flaming Skulls, and a ton more. In **CASTLEVANIA** "Lament of Innocence" you are Leon Belmont, the first of the Belmont vampire hunters. Leon ventures into Draculas castle to rescue his girl Sara. Keep in mind, this is the first time a

Belmont has ventured into Dracula's castle, so this is where the whole string of vampire hunting Belmont's comes from. The whole story is revealed during **CASTLEVANIA** "Lament of Innocence." Leon has to battle through five worlds in order to meet Dracula and get his woman back. You will get to experience the darkness of the Cathedral, the Theater, the Garden, the Alchemist Laboratory and of course, the Dungeon.

As you would expect Leon is armed with his whip, and five sub weapons. Much like all 3D games like this, you can do combinations with

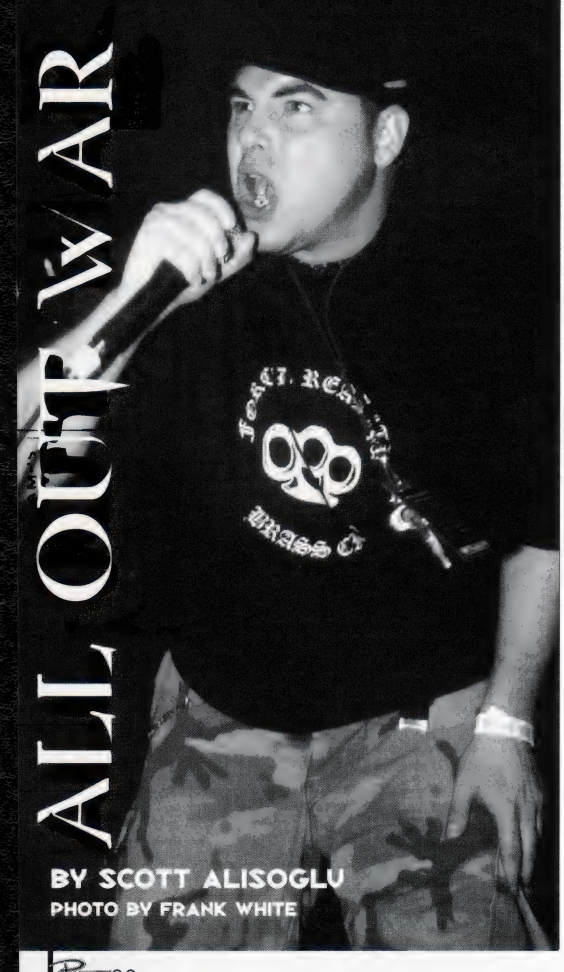
your attacks by pressing the attacks buttons, as well as throwing your axe or holy water in-between whipping a zombies head apart and watching the blood spray the walls. What more could you want in a **CASTLEVANIA** game? More epic looking worlds? Well, yeah you have those too. Music that makes you want to listen to it outside of playing **CASTLEVANIA** "Lament of Innocence?" It has that as well.

There's no doubt about it that if you are or were ever a fan of **CASTLEVANIA**, you will devour **CASTLEVANIA** "Lament of Innocence," and if you're a young lad and have never played a **CASTLEVANIA** game, you will begin your journey with **CASTLEVANIA** "Lament of Innocence." There's also a fun game you can play while you're playing, and it's "How many metal band names are in 'Lament of Innocence?'" Or if your band does not have a name yet, see if you can get one from the game. And I am sure some of these characters will make it to a MORBID ANGEL thanks list at some point!

Konami: www.konami.com/us

ALL OUT WAR

AFTER A FIVE-YEAR HIATUS, NEW YORK'S NECK-SNAPPING METAL WARRIORS HAVE RETURNED WITH A NEW ALBUM ON VICTORY RECORDS CALLED CONDEMNED TO SUFFER. DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD, LEAD VOCALIST MIKE SCORE WENT TO COLLEGE, GOT A DEGREE, AND HAS BEEN TEACHING HISTORY DURING THE PAST YEAR. COMBINING HIS THOUGHT-PROVOKING LYRICAL CONTENT WITH HIS BAND'S VICIOUS SOUND, **ALL OUT WAR** LEAVES A PATH OF SCORCHED EARTH AND NEVER TAKES A PRISONER. JUST DON'T CALL THEM METALCORE.



BY SCOTT ALISOGLU
PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

Pit: I understand you're a history teacher. That's quite a lifestyle combination. Do your students dig that?

Mike Score: Ah yeah, it works out for me though. I don't care if they dig it at all [Laughs]. No, it's all right. They think it's kinda funny. You know, you've got your typical kids that aren't into it at all and really don't care. Then you've got your kids that think it's weird and then you've got your kids that think it's cool.

Are you teaching high school?

Yeah, I teach ninth grade, which is freshman, then I teach 12th grade, which is seniors.

***You actually formed over a decade ago. Can you give me a brief history of the band for those not familiar with* ALL OUT WAR?**

There is a band from Brooklyn called MARAUDER and their ex-guitar player Chris lived by me. We were hanging out one day. We were both into hardcore and metal, and we were hanging out one night and said, you know, we should just start a fuckin' band that sounds like KREATOR. Just having everyone come out and basically beat the shit out of each other and play really heavy music. At the time, not a lot of bands were playing metal. Now we've got all these bands that are like metalcore or whatever. Nobody was doing this shit in '91. There were a few bands, but for the most part nobody was doing it. There were bands that were doing the whole CRO-MAGS type thing, but no one was doing a lot of death metal stuff and mixing it up with like KREATOR. Our big influences at the beginning were DESTRUCTION, SODOM, KREATOR, and all those German thrash bands. We started writing stuff like that and it just progressed. Then all of a sudden there were like eight million fuckin' shitty hardcore bands doing the same thing.

What was the process of recording* Condemned to Suffer *like?

It flowed really naturally. It was the most natural progression I've ever been involved in.

Did you all contribute to the writing?

Yeah, everybody contributes.

How did you end up on Victory Records?

We played out in Chicago. We did a tour and we were meeting up with BLOOD FOR BLOOD. They were already on Victory. We went out to Chicago and played a hardcore festival in Chicago and they were all there. They liked it and that's what happened.

I'm not the first person to call your musical style a mix of thrash with elements of hardcore. People keep throwing out SLAYER and the CRO-MAGS. Do agree with that description?

To a point. I think that if this whole bridging of the gap didn't happen, I think we'd be basically a metal band. We're the only band that Victory has that is just balls-out metal. We started out and had a little bit of CRO-MAGS [influence] because we were always into the CRO-MAGS. Especially on this record, there really is no hardcore connection at all, besides the fact that we all grew up going to hardcore shows. I grew up going to both.

Do you think the term metalcore is overused?

I think it's fuckin' ridiculous for the most part. It's stupid. The only reason why it even exists is because both genres are too close-minded and ignorant to accept the other. These short-haired hardcore kids think it's some kind of stigma to be associated straight up with metal and the metal kids think that if you don't look like a straight up metal band then you can't be a metal band. So that's where metalcore comes in. Metalcore is just an ignorant fuckin' phrase for a bunch of people that really need that separation.

It's just heavy music.

Right. It's just good, dirty underground music. Period.

The guitar solos on the album, if you can call them that, really have that cutting Kerry King style to them. It's like get in and get out.

Yeah, except there is one guitar part on "Bleeding the Weak" that totally reminds me of Dio. When they were putting it together, I was like, damn it sounds like fuckin' Vivian Campbell.

Much of your lyrical content seems to deal with war and religion. Are these areas of great interest to you?

First of all, with the lyrics, I don't fuckin' understand how people get that we're a Christian band. I mean read the fuckin' lyrics. I get that all the time, especially from kids with more of a hardcore background. From a lot of these hardcore kids, I see on the Internet that we're a Christian band and I don't know how they get that, especially with songs like "Two Thousand Years," which is totally dissin' organized religion. So with religion, I totally believe that there is a higher force out there, but I don't believe that it's the traditional God that organized religion talks about. I think that there has to be some kind of prime mover out there that started this whole thing. It's hard for me to believe that things just happened. But do I think that it's some guy with a white beard sitting out there calling the shots? No. The reason why I use a lot of the symbolism that I use is because I decided a long time ago that a lot of people, no matter what, have some sort of Judeo-Christian [background], whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, especially in the United States where they can understand that symbolism. So when you're trying to get across world destruction and you're trying to use symbolism, what better way than to use something that everybody understands? That's why I throw that in there. As far as the world goes, some people say you're so fuckin' negative. Turn on the frickin' news, moron! These people sit there and they just don't get it. What, do they want me to sing about how happy I am and how great the world is and how everybody should hold hands and go out and be unified behind hardcore? What the hell is that?

"Two Thousand Years" is actually my favorite song on the album. It seems that you're saying the same things keep happening over and over again.

I'm getting at that, and the danger of modern times now is that so many people have access to weapons of mass destruction. Now it's a real dangerous time. Now is when you have to be aware of your surroundings. I think a lot of people aren't really aware of what's going on in the world. They just sit there, listen to the news, they listen to politicians, and they buy into all this shit. They're too ignorant to look up the facts and understand world politics. They look at America and think this is the way it is, and they don't realize how crazy the rest of the world is. Don't get me wrong, I love the United States, but the problem and the reason why the world is such a crazy and scary place right is now is there are all these people running around in the rest of the world that have access to a lot of weapons of mass destruction. They have access to biological weapons and they're disgruntled and looking to use them because they're just that far-gone in life. Right or wrong? Whatever. That's not even an issue. Politics aren't even the issue in this. The whole issue is be aware that the world is a dangerous place right now and be aware that these people are not afraid to use these things. Be aware that no matter what you do, they're out there.

IT IS NO GREAT SECRET THAT MANY SCANDINAVIAN ACTS HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY J.R. TOLKIEN'S LORD OF THE RINGS. LYRICAL NODS TO MIDDLE EARTH HAVE BEEN PREVALENT IN BLACK METAL SINCE ITS VERY CONCEPTION, AS WELL AS MANY OTHER FORMS OF AVANT-GARDE EURO-METAL. HAILING FROM FINLAND, **BATTLELORE** IS ONE OF THE FIRST TO TAKE THIS FASCINATION BEYOND A SIMPLE HOMAGE AND MAKE IT THEIR ENTIRE MISSION, STAGE PRESENCE, IMAGE AND LYRICAL FOCUS.

Pit: Is the entire album inspired by Tolkien's Middle Earth or does* BATTLELORE *have its own fantasy world, much like* IMMORTAL*'s Blashkyrth?

Jussi Rautio: The entire album is inspired by Middle Earth, though some hardcore fans of Tolkien may find some differences in certain details.

Are all the songs on the album interconnected or do they stand alone as singular stories?

The only connection between the songs is that they all take place in Middle Earth. One new song continues a tale from our previous album.

Can you explain the entire concept of the album?

We try to create an atmosphere where you can experience the battles and beauty of Middle Earth. The music, lyrics and cover art aim for a larger entity.

How does* Sword's Song *compare to your last record?

Sword`s Song was mainly written and composed within half a year. *Where The Shadows Lie* contained songs from a much longer period of time. I think the songs are much better and everyone in the band have grown as artists.

How does the band create the compositions - is it a totally democratic process?

Jyri Vahvanen writes most of the songs and everyone else brings their own elements to the music. When we decide what stays in a song and what doesn`t, we are quite democratic. The producer also brought his own visions into the process.

What is on the* Journey *DVD that comes with the album?

There is one music video, some interviews, a studio session, a few live shows and some backstage fooling around.

How is* BATTLELORE *perceived in the Finnish scene?

We are not yet well known in Finland, although we have done more gigs and interviews abroad. Everyone whose seen us live are on our side.

What is "The Mark Of The Bear?"

It`s our song which tells about a tribe called The Beorning. They can take shape of a bear.

What are the band's influences?

Everyone has their own favorites and all of the music we hear ultimately influences our work.

What are your stage shows like? Are they very theatrical?

Right now our stage shows resemble normal heavy metal shows. Of course our clothes and makeup make it much more special.

What are you listening to right now?

KUYSS is my long time favorite. SYSTEM OF A DOWN's albums are both great. I learned to love SIRENIA when we were touring with them. Right now BJÖRK is in my CD player.

What is the best horror film kill of all time?

When the guy goes through the alien with the chainshaw in "Bad Taste." I think it's scarier when you don't actually see the killing.

What is the best guitar solo of all time?

JIMI HENDRIX's "Little Wing." It's the perfect climax for the song. I don`t like solos where the guitarist just shows how fast he can play and doesn't add anything to the song.

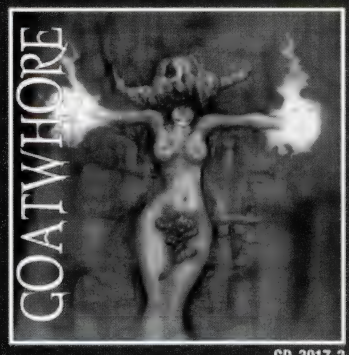
What do you think of the American scene?

America has lots of different bands and artists. You have terrible things like country music but also artists like Tori Amos who make it all good.

BY RYAN BARTEK

GOATWHORE

Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun



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With its Rotten Records debut, *The Eclipse of the Ages Into Black*, Louisiana miscreants Goatwhore explored old school satanic black metal as no American act had before. Goatwhore's new second effort, *Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun*, ventures into darker, less conventional territory. Probing the pitch-black recesses of mind and soul in a disturbing, introspective examination of dark forces at work, and unleashing it all with a feral hookiness and atmospheric flare, the band steps beyond the bounds of mere black metal into a realm all its own.

rottenrecords.com

VAMPIRE MOOOSE

Debut/Self Titled

St. Louis extremists *Vampire Mooose* are anything but your average metal beast. Fusing death metal brutality and raw hardcore intensity with abstract, progressive arrangements and free-jazz freakouts, the band is unorthodox, unrelenting and utterly unpredictable. Their Rotten Records debut is an insane cross-breeding of Meshuggah, Dillinger Escape Plan and Obituary-style sonic terror tactics –only weirder and more vicious. They call it "rawkus," and it will rock your world.

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Pit Magazine

PISSING RAZORS

BY SCOTT ALISOGLU

DRUMMER EDDY GARCIA IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF EL PASO, TEXAS' **PISSING RAZORS.** HE KNEW WHAT HE WANTED TO DO EVER SINCE THE KILLER SELF-TITLED DEBUT AND NEVER LOOKED BACK. EDDY IS ON HIS THIRD LEAD SINGER AND THIRD GUITARIST, YET YOU CAN TELL LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN THE ABRASIVE SOUND AND UNRELENTING AGGRESSION THAT CHARACTERIZE A **PISSING RAZORS** ALBUM.

Pit: You've got the new album out now,* Evolution. *Talk a little bit about how this one compares to your previous releases.

Eddy Garcia: It's definitely different from everything else we've done. That's kind of the direction I wanted to go. I didn't want to rehash things we've previously done. With Andre [Acosta] coming to the band, he brings a whole other flavor vocally. The guy's not afraid to try anything. Basically the record is a little more straightforward, more simplistic. It's kind of the direction I wanted to go.

Why did you want to change direction?

It's just something you need to go through. You need to kind of reinvent yourself. I just wanted to try something different.

But it's not enough of a departure to disappoint some of the long time fans.

No, I mean some of the old fans may not like it as much as the previous releases. The whole record is not brutal from beginning to end. There are actually places where we kind of mellow out here and there.

Andre seems to have quite a bit to do with that because of his change-ups in the vocals – some cleaner and more melodic stuff.

Yeah, exactly.

Was your approach to song writing similar in that you tried to mix it up more?

Actually, for this record for writing…on previous records, I wrote from the drumming point of view. I'd figure out the drums, the rhythm, first. This time I did it backwards and wrote from the guitar a lot. I think that's partially the reason why everything is so much more straightforward.

Was that a conscious decision or did it just end up that way?

I think subconsciously I did it that way [Laughs]. I wasn't really thinking about it. It was like, oh this is a cool riff, and I'd get behind the drums and think this doesn't really need much. I just put a solid foundation under the riff.

Were Andre and Matt [DiFabio] involved in the writing at all?

Matt lives in Philadelphia so he can't get together and jam a lot. Basically, I just wrote riffs and recorded them all. I kind of had an idea of which riff would go where and basically when we got together to jam, on parts of the songs every now and then Matt would have something to add to what I had put together. We just kind of put the puzzle together.

Andre sang on* Live In The Devil's Triangle *as well.

He's definitely the best vocalist we've had, not taking anything away from any other guys we've had. He brings more to the table with his vocal range and, more importantly, with his creativity.

What does Matt bring to the band?

He's a really, really aggressive player. He has a lot of energy. I think his main forte is if you see the guy live, he's all over the place. It's a fresh feeling. I think Cesar [Soto] was just burnt out on the whole scene. It's tough when someone is fizzling out. Matt is definitely a guy that wants to be there and keep playing.

How difficult is it having a band member living in Philadelphia while the rest of you are in Texas?

It's tough, man. It kind of sucks in a way when you can't get together and jam and work on stuff. In another sense it's kind of cool to sit by yourself and work on stuff, then get together with the guys and see how it turns out.

***Matt is splitting time with SINGLE BULLET THEORY and* PISSING RAZORS?**

Yeah, they're about to go on tour with KING DIAMOND and ENTOMBED. **PISSING RAZORS** is priority, but at this point in our career, basically – not that we don't like going out on the road – it's got to be something that's really good for us. Bending over backwards to go out on tour, coming home broke and almost homeless is tough. We've done plenty of touring to back up what the band's all about. We hope to do more, but it's definitely got to be a worthwhile tour for us.

So it should be easier with him splitting time. You're not going to be road-dogging constantly in every little club.

No. Whenever we do something, we'll make the most out of our time.

Are there any big tours that you've gotten offers to do?

I was talking to the CANNIBAL CORPSE guys about possibly hooking up with them in Europe. They're here in El Paso recording their new record. Hopefully, we can get something hooked up with those guys.

You played with them on the Spring Neck Break Tour a while back. That was a really interesting mix of bands with CANNIBAL CORPSE, INCANTATION, and DARK FUNERAL.

Yeah, we did it in the States. It was an awesome tour, one of the best. I wasn't quite sure how that was going to go over. We were kind of the oddballs on that tour, but it worked out really good for us.

Are there any songs on the new album that you are particularly proud of or that have special meaning for you?

I think "Perseverance" is probably the song that's the most out there. It's the most different from what we've done. It's out there, but it's still us.

You also did a version of "Evolution" ["Evolociun"] sung in Spanish.

Yeah, it's something that we've always wanted to do. When Joe [Rodriquez] was in the band, he was always skeptical about doing it. He could do it, but he was skeptical. He was like, "I don't know if it would sound cool" or whatever. And then Jason [Bragg] couldn't speak Spanish, so that was out of the question. With Andre, he was like, "hell yeah," and went right after it and got it done.

When Andre and Matt came into the band, how quickly did they pick up on the old material?

It's the same with a lot of guys. There is a certain style of riffing that is very timing-oriented. It sounds real easy; all the riffs sound really easy, but it can be can hard. When you play them properly, there are a lot of little timing issues that you've got to pick up on. That's the main thing that anybody really had a problem with.

So Matt was maybe a bit surprised that the riffs weren't as easy as they sounded.

Yeah, I think he was. He came and did really good. He came in prepared and knew the arrangements and the songs. Some of the riffs were being played wrong. He wouldn't understand how that [the timing] makes a difference, but I was like, "dude it does." He's pretty much got them down.

You produced this album, as well as the last two albums. The studio is in your house. Are you getting more comfortable with producing? Are you digging it?

Yeah, we built the studio on my house. It's definitely something I really like to do. I'm starting to get more work from other bands. I'm about to do a band called KRYOBURN that just got signed. They're fuckin' out there; amazing band, really young dudes. They're like a cross between MESHUGGAH, FEAR FACTORY… The stuff they're playing is really fuckin' hard [Laughs].

That's got to help on the financial side of things as far as making a living.

No doubt. I can stay busier and it will allow me to do other things down the road. That's slowly coming along. Hopefully in the next couple of years I'll be able to stay quite a bit busier with it.

Have you named the studio?

Yeah, we called it Crank.

Are things still cool with you and Spitfire Records?

Most of the guys there are really high on the band and they do everything they can, but unfortunately I think we're at the bottom of the barrel on their agenda. We really can't get what we would like done, but it's not for lack of effort on the part of the people who are working there.

How many more albums will you be with them for?

Well, they have an option but I doubt they're gonna pick it up. Hopefully we'll become free agents after this one.

Do you see* PISSING RAZORS *sticking around for another ten years or so?

I don't see why not, man, as long as we keep making records. It's a beautiful thing. When we did our first record, I was thinking to myself, wow, it would be great if we could do another one, and here we are six records into it. I never thought I'd get to do this [Laughs]. It's cool as long as people are out there and buying records, whether it's a couple of thousand, 10,000 copies, whatever, it's cool.

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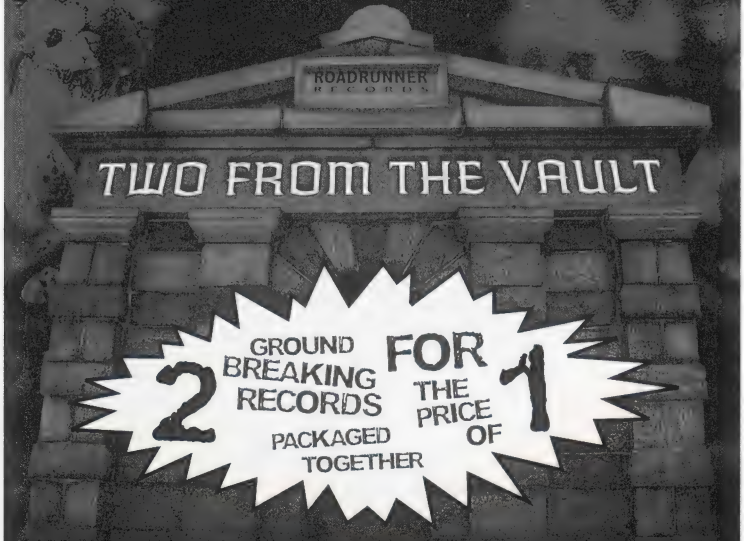

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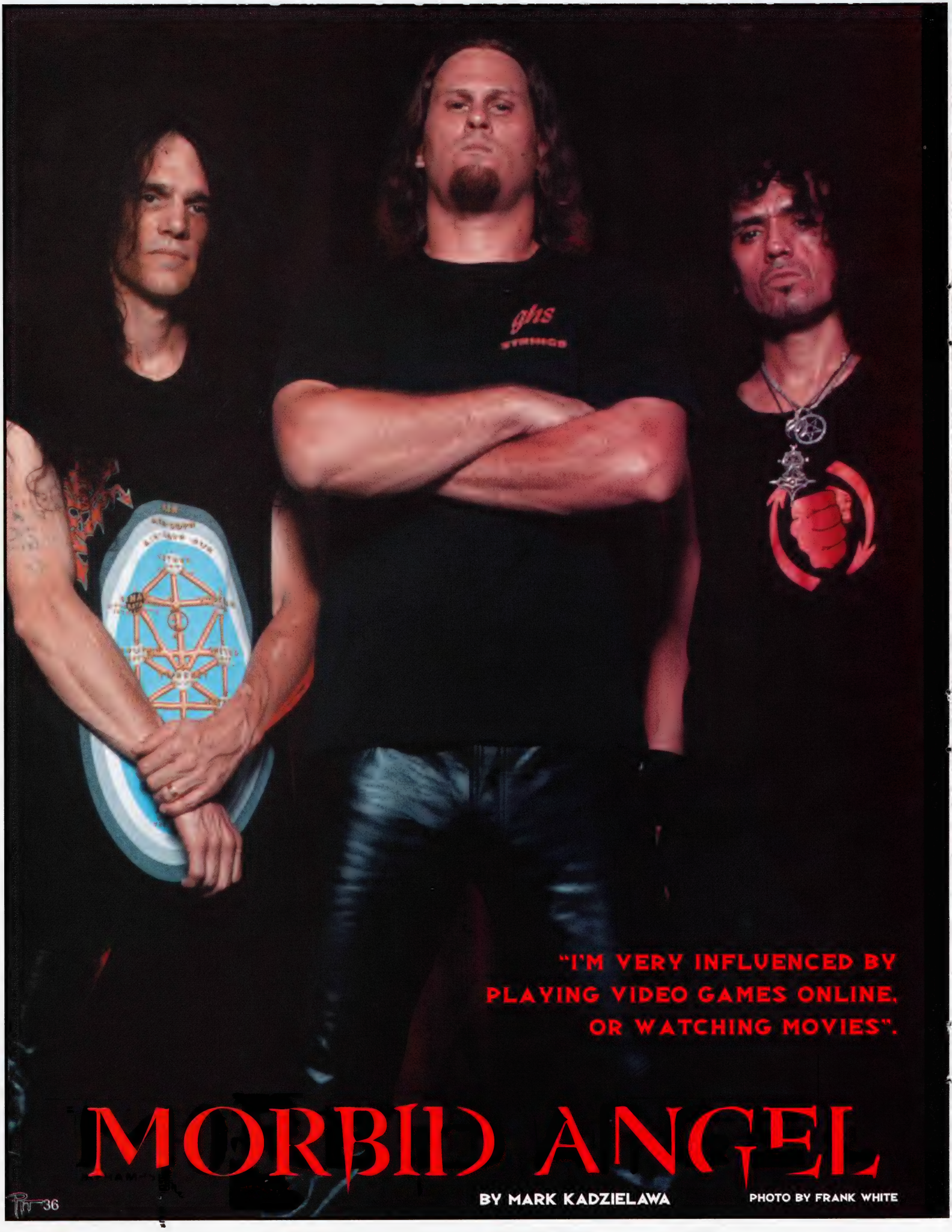

"I'M VERY INFLUENCED BY PLAYING VIDEO GAMES ONLINE, OR WATCHING MOVIES".

MORBID ANGEL

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

DESPITE THE RECENT QUAKES IN THE **MORBID ANGEL** CAMP, THE BAND CONTINUES TO BE AS INVENTIVE AS EVER. WHEN VOCALIST-BASSIST, STEVE TUCKER, LEFT THE BAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST TOUR, NO ONE KNEW WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. NO ONE EXCEPT THE BAND'S FOUNDER, TREY AZAGTHOTH, WHO KNEW HE WOULD CONTINUE WITH HIS GROUP. **MORBID ANGEL** CONTINUED TO TOUR WITH A TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT VOCALIST, AND FULFILLED ALL OF ITS OBLIGATIONS. WHEN THE TIME CAME TO RECORD ANOTHER ALBUM, **MORBID ANGEL** REGROUPED, MINUS ERIC RUTAN, AND CREATED A NEW RECORD. THE NEW ALBUM, HERETIC, IS VERY STRONG AND ORIGINAL. THE RECORD TAKES THE LISTENER TO NEW UNEXPLORED MUSICAL DIMENSIONS, WITHOUT LOOSING A BEAT OF THE ORIGINAL STYLE CREATED AND ESTABLISHED BY **MORBID ANGEL**. SIX-STRINGER (SOMETIMES SEVEN-STRINGER), TREY AZAGTHOTH, DISCUSSES THE RECENT TRIBULATIONS, AND THE SONGWRITING PROCESS.

Pit: For a while the future of* MORBID ANGEL *was very uncertain. What were you plans at the time?

Trey Azagthoth: I just wanted to play it by ear. I gave everyone time to make up their minds as to where they wanted to go. As far as myself, I knew I would be doing it because I've been doing it forever. The only concern to me was to maintain the feeling in music, and continue to progress. I just wanted to stay inspired and create good music filled with passion. I guess I understand what the people were saying, when something drastic happens, everyone thinks I should be moving on to other things. I just don't think that way. I kinda think my own way. I knew that I would continue with this band. I'm gonna keep doing it as long as it feels right to me. Whoever is gonna be here to do it with me, will be here.

What was the initial reason for Steve's departure?

He just had some personal things he had to take care of. We were doing so much touring at that time, and he felt he had to let go. We didn't want to stop touring, so we filled in with another player, and kept going.

When did Steve decide to re-join the band, was the process easy?

It was basically done after I got most of the material already prepared. I was all set and ready to record. I was thinking about who I would get to sing on this record. I decided to give Steve a call first to see what he could contribute, and if he would be interested. He was interested, and did it, and I think it turned out excellent. I'm very happy with the lyrics, phrasing, all of it. It was just what I was looking for.

The new album is very groove driven, in many ways it continues where* Gateways *left off.

Yeah, lots of groove. I think it shows where I'm at creatively and musically. Even the very brutal heavy parts have a lot of feeling.

I feel that's the best way MORBID ANGEL comes across. For example, to this day I have a hard time following* The Covenant *record, whereas what you did on the last four studio albums is quite excellent, and only continues to improve.

That makes sense. I've been working on these very interesting polyrhythms on guitar. It makes the guitar feel like it's playing backwards, and do really weird things against each other. Polyrhythms are just very crazy, and when you put them against these catchy-groovy drumbeats, you get something original. You still maintain your brutality and heaviness, but it takes the music in another dimension. I feel that every song on this record has something more than a blast beat going on. There is a lot of orchestration going on within the music I write today. Also, there are a lot of new types of rhythms and approaches on this record. For example, the third track on the album is probably the best example of that. If you listen to it closely you will realize that it's like two songs combined in one. And there's a lot of unusual guitar work in there. I began my fascination with this experimentation around the *Formulas* record, and it only continues to progress. I'm just having a good time doing this, and making music that really comes across.

It also makes the band sound very fresh at the same time, and that's very noticeable on the last few records as well.

You see, I'm probably my biggest critic. I throw away a lot of riffs. I spend a lot of time working on the arrangements. I'm just very critical, and I want to make sure everything is good, feels good, and has a passion. Maybe some other bands want to go with what is safe, and that would be very easy for me to do. Follow whatever formula they set. It's hard to think for other people. But for me, I love doing things that are different because I feel like I'm a very dynamic person. This is a very dynamic band, and we do make our own rules. We always try to recreate ourselves with each new record. I don't want to limit myself when I don't have to. This record took a while to make, but it's definitely strong and original music. I even worked on some of the drumbeats, using the drum machine, when I wrote the music. So, I knew exactly what I had in mind.

I never knew you used a drum machine when you have a drummer of Pete's caliber in that band. On the other hand, it does make sense, and gives you a good visual of the sound. Now, when you actually present these songs to Pete, does he take it to the next level?

Sure. I think he does. The drum machine sounds very sterile, and will never replace the real drummer. The album came out with some extra demos that actually have the demos I did with the drum machine, so you can compare it yourself. These are the same demos that I give to Pete to learn the songs. You can hear the difference. He definitely added a living human feel. When Pete worked on the songs he considered some of the guidelines I came up with, but he made it much more exciting. He added dynamics to the songs, and really made them come alive.

You wrote most of the material on this album. Do you prefer to write alone, or you like to have someone to bounce ideas of?

I really prefer to work alone. On the other hand I can't say that I completely wrote and arranged every single track on this record. I worked with Pete on a few songs, and Pete actually did the arrangements on one song himself. So, there was collaboration where I didn't even use the drum machine, it was written by the two of us in a live feel. I like working on the music in my own little studio. Where I come up with the riff, the drum beat, and then I can come up with complementary rhythms. It's just a lot of fun to experiment and explore, and see what kind of world I can create with it. When the second guitar goes in, and does all these weird things, it just makes the whole song bigger. So, for that reason, I like working on the music by myself.

Do you still manage to pick up new influences as you go along?

I can't say that I got any new musical influences. I was pretty much influenced by PANTERA when we toured with them. I really like that band. I know they're not death metal, but they had a proper feel, and had a nice groove going on. I was influenced by it to some degree, but I don't think it manifested itself on the record. This new album came as a result of a lot of meditation. I'm very influenced by playing video games online, or watching movies. That really inspired me.

Now that Eric Rutan is officially gone from the band, who will be the new touring guitar player?

We will definitely have someone on tour with us. It would be impossible to pull this material off with one guitar player. I'm not sure who it's going to be yet.

You've been doing this band for nearly 20 years. Are you able to live off the music, and not worry about not making the ends meet?

We're all doing pretty good. We don't have millions of dollars, but we are comfortable. I pretty much just live off the band, and we do well. I would like to sell more records. It would change our lifestyles drastically. But, that's not why we're doing it. If we were just trying to make money, we wouldn't make the music so difficult to get into. In fact, I do that on purpose. I make sure that the music is really thick, and not easy to get into. I just don't want to write boring music, it does not interest me. We see ourselves as the instruments of the creative force through us. Think for yourself. We were always about magic and occult in a creative way. It's not about burning churches. We take the magic and use it in a positive way to create music. Our general message was always the same and simple, and that's think for yourself.

Would you say that creatively you've reached your peak, or is there still more to achieve?

I'm very careful in how I think about this. If I say that I am in my limits, then I am. If I say it and believe it, then there I am. I don't want to make it my reality because it's not. I just want to say that this new record offers a lot of fresh ideas. I think it has a lot more going on than any other record. I think there's still a lot more to go for me in the future. I'll be doing it as long I can maintain passion. Once I realize that I'm some kind of fake then I'll gladly step down.

For a guitar player, you've been quite inventive. Do you think you get enough respect from the guitar community?

It's hard to say. I think that me and the band, we get a lot of respect. I don't know. When we're on tour for instance, people come up to me and tell me they enjoy my playing. They were inspired by my music, and that makes me feel good. I do feel great if I make some kind of impact. For me, when I was a listener before I became a guitar player, I was totally moved by people like Eddie Van Halen. When I was growing up in the late 70's and all those great records came out, I was so impressed with how inventive Eddie was as a player. He was not afraid to think outside the box, and I kinda feel I'm like that too. I'm not Eddie Van Halen, but I'm driven to be innovative. I do what I do, and I'm totally in my own world. I don't care what's in, or what's popular. I just know what I'm driven by, and I know what I want to do.

MONSTROSITY

BY JON "K" KONJOYAN

ONE OF THE PREEMINENT BANDS TO EMERGE FROM THE HALLOWED FLORIDA DEATH METAL SCENE IS BACK WITH A NEW CD. PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT A NEW MONSTROSITY RELEASE IS AN EVENT. (THIS IS ONLY THEIR FOURTH STUDIO ALBUM IN THE 14 YEAR HISTORY OF THE GROUP.) WELL KNOWN AS THE BAND THAT GAVE **CANNIBAL CORPSE**'S GEORGE "CORPSEGRINDER" FISHER HIS START, **MONSTROSITY** IS ALSO FAMED FOR ITS RELENTLESSLY BRUTAL LIVE SHOW AND CONSTANT TOURING. THE NEW ALBUM RISE TO POWER, IS THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP IN THE PROGRESSION OF MONSTROSITY'S BRAND OF INTENSELY HEAVY, TECHNICAL DEATH METAL, FOLLOWING THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED ALBUMS MILLENNIUM, AND IN DARK PURITY.

Pit: Prior to joining* MONSTROSITY, *what were you doing?

Sam Molina: Before joining **MONSTROSITY**, I spent about ten years trying to form my own death metal band in Ft. Myers. Facing the same problems that everyone else faces trying to hold a band together, you meet people that will swear to you that they are serious musicians. But then they're too tired after work to practice, or they never show up, or they get stupid drunk, or go to jail, or fall in love and start having kids and sell their equipment. Basically, I spent almost a decade struggling the same way everyone else does trying to form and hold a working band together.

***How did you come to join* MONSTROSITY?**

I was jamming with a Ft. Myers band called CALIBOS, and we opened for **MONSTROSITY**. At the time, **MONSTROSITY** had this guy Bobby on vocals but he only lasted one tour. Lee (Harrison) contacted CALIBOS' vocalist Chase about filling in. Chase actually spent a couple of weeks learning their lyrics, but about a week before he was supposed to go on the road, he backed out. He decided that he loved his wife too much to leave her alone for long periods of time. I knew that I could do the vocals for the tour, so I asked Chase to contact **MONSTROSITY** on my behalf. That's it. One US tour turned into two, then Mexico, Brazil, Europe, and then writing most of the lyrics for the new album.

Was the prospect of jumping into a national band scary?

Definitely! I had very little experience doing vocals, and the biggest crowd I had ever played to was maybe about 30 people. For the first couple of shows, I actually didn't know all of the lyrics because of the short amount of time I had to get ready. I had to write out some of the lyrics on paper, then walk out on stage before we went on and tape them to the floor where I would be standing. I tried to make it look like I was putting down the set list for the show, but it was actually lyrics.

***What was the most difficult part of your new life in* MONSTROSITY?**

Knowing that every fan at those shows would be comparing my vocals live to what they heard Corpsegrinder and Jason Avery do on the albums. The other guys in **MONSTROSITY** were always very supportive. They would tell me I sounded good and things like that.

What's the most satisfying part of being in the band?

It's been great traveling to different parts of the country and different parts of the world, making friends with people who live in places that I never would have even gone to if not for this band. It's satisfying to reach a point where I am able to jam with serious musicians. Also, knowing that all the struggles and frustrations of those years trying to be part of a serious band, and dealing with people who, in the end, fell off to the side somewhere, has finally led to being part of a band that, just a couple of years ago, I could only sit at home and listen to on my stereo.

As you mentioned, you were the band's frontman for a while, but Jason Avery is now back in the lead vocalist spot. Why the change?

I am very pleased with Jason's return to the vocal spot. I had some fun doing vocals, and am still amazed that I pulled that off. But I was never really fully comfortable in that position. Lee, Tony, and Mike could see that. Jason had been in contact with Lee and expressed his desire to return to the band. He is a great vocalist and lyric writer. Live, he has a stage presence that I never had. Meanwhile, the first time I walked back on stage and put on my guitar instead of taking front and center to pick up the microphone, it was just awesome. I am confident that my place is on guitar.

The new CD,* Rise To Power, *is crushing. It seems like the band has taken the brutality up a notch especially in the tempo department. What was in your minds as you entered the studio?

I had been listening to the demos that Lee and Tony had been recording over the past couple of years getting prepared for this album, and it was evident to me, that even in that preproduction phase, this was going to be a brutal album. For my part, I tried to reflect that in my lyric writing. Such a long period of time had passed since the last release that the pressure was on to make sure this album crushed.

The band's first CD,* Imperial Doom, *is considered to be a metal classic by many. Why do you think it has held up so well?

It's a combination of intelligent songwriting and sheer brutality. It's not some loosely thrown together and packaged piece of crap that some bands will release just to have an album out. Everywhere we play people are always screaming for those songs and we love playing them.

MONSTROSITY ***has been around for 13 years. Obviously, the band and death metal in general are not a quick trend! What is the key to staying power and the power of the music?***

Death metal has shown the ability to last even without mainstream support because the fans recognize the honesty and integrity of the music. I personally believe that as a fan and musician, death metal is the only genre of music that I will truly ever be able to identify with. I have no desire to do anything else.

A few years ago, vocalist George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher left your band to front CANNIBAL CORPSE. Do the guys still have a good relationship with Fisher?

Yeah, he actually did one show with **MONSTROSITY** after Bobby disappeared. He went down to Ft. Lauderdale with the band after just one practice and pulled off a killer show. It's not like he comes over and hangs out all the time or anything like that, but I would say a good relationship exists there.

Your world touring schedule is seemingly nonstop. What countries/cities have been the most exciting?

As far as the shows, it's always great to go on stage and jam for people that love to hear death metal. That goes for every country or city we've ever played in. I had my birthday last year while we were in Poland. Everyone at the venue sang "Happy Birthday" to me, first in English, then in Polish. Where else could that happen except on tour?

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GOATWHORE

I KNOW THERE ARE QUITE A FEW AMERICAN BLACK METAL BANDS OUT THERE, BUT NONE THAT I REALLY ENJOY AS MUCH AS **GOATWHORE.** MAYBE I LIKE THEM SIMPLY BECAUSE THE NUCLEUS OF THE BAND IS MADE UP OF FORMER **ACID BATH** AND **CROWBAR** GUITARIST SAMMY DUET AND **SOILENT GREEN** FRONT MAN BEN FALGOUST. WHATEVER IT IS, THEIR 2000 RELEASE ECLIPSE OF AGES INTO BLACK WAS MY FAVORITE AMERICAN BLACK METAL ALBUM UNTIL I HEARD THEIR LATEST ALBUM, FUNERAL DIRGE FOR THE ROTTING SUN.

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

Pit: What took so long for the album to come out?

Sammy Duet: Well the truth can come out now that this is our last album with Rotten Records. This was not our fault. The album was recorded and finished with the artwork and mastering by December of 2002. They were all tripping out because of all this downloading stuff, so they wanted copy protection on the CD. I personally think they were overreacting with the whole thing. They kept upgrading the system and it kept getting pushed back. It was all in their hands.

You've already done a lot of touring behind an album that hadn't been released yet.

Yeah, that was frustrating. We've been on the road busting our balls, and we didn't even have any product to support. It felt we were doing this work for nothing. But I really don't mind because I love touring. It's out now, so it's all good I guess.

This new album seems to be a little bit different from your first album

Yeah it's a lot different, but it's still the same in a lot of ways. I think we are starting to find ourselves musically. *Eclipse* was like a very abrasive album. It was no mercy. I feel that we were trying to prove something on that album. We were in a different frame of mind then. We were totally obsessed with the black metal scene when we were writing that album. We were trying to play extremely fast and abrasive. On this album we were trying to concentrate more on the music instead of just playing fast.

To me this album seems to have a lot more grooves, and quite a few songs remind me of CELTIC FROST.

Oh totally. That's one of our biggest influences and always will be. I don't think we will ever escape from that sound. This album is like a step forward, it's a lot more personal too. A lot more people can relate to it.

Not to take anything away from the first album, which was great, but this album is a lot easier to listen to.

Yeah, that's what I've been hearing a lot. My friends have been saying it's a lot more listenable and music oriented.

For this CD, there are actually lyrics printed in the booklet this time. And they are pretty dark.

Well I didn't write as much of this one as I did on the first one. I did maybe 40%. The lyrics on this one are a lot more subconscious, personal kind of stuff. When I go back and read them, I can reflect on what was going on in my life at the time.

You and Ben trade off on vocals. How do you decide who is going to take which parts?

It all depends on what ideas Ben or I have. If I have an idea for a line, but I don't think I would sound good doing it, I will ask Ben, and he will do the same for me. Sometimes we will do it together to get that really sick sound. But it's all spontaneous; it's nothing we planned out.

So how are things working out with Tim, the new guitar player?

Tim's no longer with the band. We just decided we've been a four piece for so long anyway. Things just didn't work out when he was in the band, and we recorded this album as a four piece anyway. Some stuff happened, and he's no longer with us.

So you will continue on as a four piece?

Yes. Unless we find some incredibly awesome guitar player that we can't refuse. But I seriously doubt that is going to happen.

You're gearing up for your next tour already. That's quite a package you are on.

Yeah, it's the "Art of Noise 2" tour. It's us, AMON AMARTH, VADER, KREATOR, and NILE. Yeah that is gonna be awesome, I can't wait. Then we do some headlining shows, and then we take a break. Then in January and February we're supposed to be going out with some extremely big death metal bands that I can't mention right now.

This is your last album with Rotten Records. Are you already looking at labels for album number three?

No, we're not gonna think about until we are really done touring for this album. We've already started writing for the third album and we have some songs already written. We've thought about doing like a five song EP before the next full length comes out. Or we might just save the songs for the full length. We've been approached by a lot of labels, but we're not deciding on anything yet.

What's the situation with your status in CROWBAR?

I really don't know. I guess they just got impatient with me and they decided to start writing and recording their album. I don't know if I'll actually have time to be involved with the band anymore. There are no bad feelings or anything.

But you haven't heard from Kirk or anyone lately?

Not really.

Apparently former PANTERA/DOWN bassist Rex is in the band now?

Yeah, I think he's producing the album too. I talked to Craig before they went into the studio, but that was only like five minutes. That was the extent of me talking to anyone from CROWBAR.

It seems like ACID BATH gets a bigger cult following every year. Does that surprise you at all?

It does and it doesn't. It's like they wait until we've broken up and long gone before they start supporting that band. It's like the story of my life. Nothing I can do goes right. It does surprise me that everybody likes that band because back then everybody hated us. That was back in like the death metal heyday and it didn't have total death metal growling and blast beats the whole time.

It seems like you were ahead of your time?

I guess (laughs). I don't know what we were thinking. It was just five guys who were different from each other who just made this weird rock and roll.

EVERYONE THAT KNOWS THEIR DEATH METAL CERTAINLY AGREES THAT **DYING FETUS** ARE A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. 2003 HAS BEEN A BUSY YEAR FOR THE BAND, PUTTING OUT THEIR LATEST EPOCH, STOP AT NOTHING, AND TOURING RELENTLESSLY. PIT RECENTLY SPOKE TO MAINMAN JOHN GALLAGHER AND VOCALIST VINCE MATTHEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS OMINOUS WRECKING MACHINE.

Pit: From what I understand you're the last remaining* DYING FETUS *member and have basically restarted the band with an entirely new lineup. What caused this and why did you decide to keep the* DYING FETUS *moniker?

John Gallagher: Well this has been my passion since 1992 and, even back in the day, there were consistent line-up changes. What people know as the original line-up isn't really so. As far as myself, I'm just not ready to throw in the towel yet. It was my goal to get some good guys to go out and play with again. The momentum is building back up, so I'm really happy with everything right now as far as the live show and the album.

Do you consider yourself a lifer in the extreme metal scene?

JG: I would say so. I'm always doing something for the scene or tossing around some kind of ideas. I'm pretty happy with getting my label Bloodlust Records up and running. There isn't anything concrete just yet, but it will all come together soon enough. I'm just dealing with getting the website up and the distro together as well as helping out DEEP RED from Finland.

Any DVD plans as of right now?

JG: We've been collecting footage and have some pretty good stuff from the MISERY INDEX tour, as well as the HATE ETERNAL tour. I would say within a year we're going to have enough to put a DVD out. We just shot a video down in Atlanta for "One Shot, One Kill." I'm sure it will make its way onto the DVD in the future.

Is this the most political album you've ever done?

JG: It's always been about personal politics. I wouldn't say we're a political band. It has always been there, and we always try to incorporate different subject matter to keep it interesting.

What would you say is the bare-bones message of* Stop At Nothing *and* DYING FETUS *in general?

Vince Matthews: Our hardcore influences played into the entire concept. Definitely being true to yourself; certainly there's a lot of issues that play into that. Each song has an overall sense of resisting oppression, resisting any kind of peer pressure; doing what the right thing is for you, whether it agrees with society or not. Essentially it's just following what's in your heart. I think metal is just one of those styles where you grow up listening to it and putting up with a lot of people's resentment or misunderstanding. You really grow up having to do your own thing and not listen to anyone's criticisms.

We've entered a very dark world situation. What's your take on all that's going on?

VM: It's really hard to say because ultimately I'm going to support what the U.S.A. is doing, unless we do something completely insane. I happen to agree with some of the things we've done but not our entire stance. I'm certainly beginning to think this whole Iraq thing is going to drag out longer than needed and turn into another Vietnam. I know the song "One Shot, One Kill" definitely touched on the 9-11 attacks, and that was just one of those things where it shouldn't matter what you're political stance might be.

What's your position on the RIAA issue?

VM: It's so hard to draw a line because the first name that comes to my mind is METALLICA. People seem to misunderstand when you say you are against free downloading because it makes you out to be a money-grubber and, if you're for it, you look like you're not supporting the industry. To a certain extent, I believe in fair use. I think that if someone burns a CD and listens to it often, I would expect them to pick up a copy eventually.

RELAPSE

BY RYAN BARTEK

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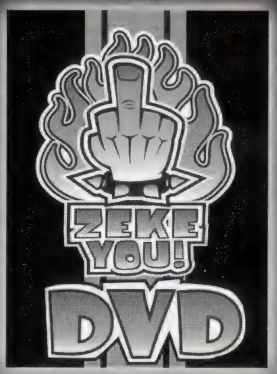

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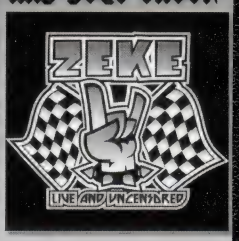

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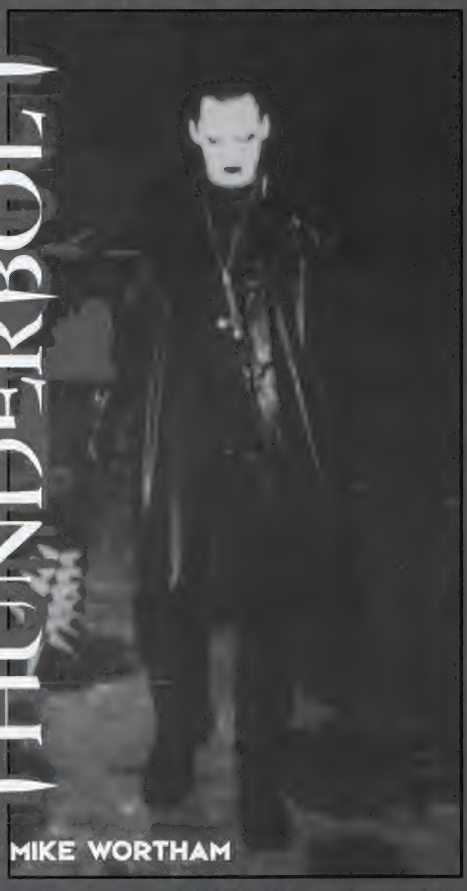
THUNDERBOLT

WHEN YOU THINK OF POLAND THE BANDS THAT COME TO MIND ARE; **GRAVELAND**, **VADER** AND **YATTERING**, BUT POLAND'S UNDERGROUND HAS SOME OF THE BEST BLACK METAL BANDS WITHIN THE SCENE TO DATE AND **THUNDERBOLT** IS ONE OF THEM.

BY MIKE WORTHAM



Pit: Pagan Greetings to you Paimon! How are you?

Paimon: Hail Satan! I'm ok now, thank you! We're preparing the new stuff for the next third full-length album of **THUNDERBOLT**.

Can you start of by telling us the history of* THUNDERBOLT, *as well as how many releases you have?

I formed **THUNDERBOLT** at the end of 1993. In 1996 we recorded our first demo-tape called *Beyond Christianity*, which was later released by Eastclan as a split demo with KATAXU's *North* demo. A year after that, I got together with Uldor (drums) and we recorded a mini lp called *Black Clouds Over Dark Majesty*, which was released on tape by Old Legend Productions. Later that year a spilt CD by Ancestral Research Records was released, again with KATAXU *Roots Thunder*. After that there was a three-year silence due to the fact that Uldor was jailed and I was looking for his successor. In 2000 I recorded together with some session members the first full-length album called *The Sons Of The Darkness*, which was released in Poland by Apocalypse Productions and Resistance Records world-wide. In 2002 we recorded the second full-length album called *The Burning Deed of Deceit* which was released by Apocalypse Productions in Poland and Greece. The label ISO666 released it world-wide. A vinyl version of *The Burning Deed of Deceit* was released by Agonia Records (limited to 500 copies), which contains a cover version of DARKTHRONE's "Transylvanian Hunger" recorded exclusively for that release.

What is the current lineup of* THUNDERBOLT? *I know that in the past you have had many member changes. Are you satisfied with the present line-up?

The present line-up of **THUNDERBOLT** is: Paimon (guitar, vocals), Molestator (guitar, vocals), D. (bass), and Necrolucas (drums). Yes, I'm really satisfied with the new line-up because all the other members are very experienced and professional musicians. Besides **THUNDERBOLT**, Molestator and Necrolucas play in another killer band from Poland called ANIMA DAMNATA and D. plays in a band called AZARATH. Both of mentioned bands are killer satanic death metal bands and you should check them out! Together we create really brutal, uncompromising killer black metal. It's the best **THUNDERBOLT** line-up so far, no doubt!

I must say your new album* The Burning Deed Of Deceit *is very impressive! I see that you have changed from your older style. I know that* THUNDERBOLT *is known for their NSBM roots in Poland and throughout Europe. Why the change to straight BM?

Thank you! I think that black metal (or metal at all) has NO connections with policy, etc. There are different kinds of music such like RAC or OI for those topics and I think that all those so-called NSBM bands should stop playing "black metal". I wrote "black metal" because most of NSBM bands are just pitiful in the musical meaning in my opinion. In the past we were close to bands such as GRAVELAND and so on, but I have nothing in common with this scene at the present time, and have not for 3 to 4 years now. Black metal in my opinion is Satanic, misanthropic art and it has nothing in common with ANY kind of policy...

Are you still involved in any of the side projects from the past such as LEGACY OF BLOOD for example? If so, which ones, and are there any releases available for people in the underground to buy?

No, I don't play in any other bands besides **THUNDERBOLT** right now. I recorded vocals for LEGACY OF BLOOD only because I was in Warsaw during their recordings and my friend Arch just asked me if I could record vocal parts for them because they didn't have any vocalist. So I did it.

What are some of your main influences when it comes to writing your music? What inspires your music and lyrics? In your opinion, what are positives and negatives in Poland?

My inspirations are hatred towards slavish religions, the dark side, long walks through the woods, longing for the ancient times and my whole life experiences gives me a lot of inspirations almost every day. The positive things in Poland are nature, landscapes and the pagan heritage. The negative things in Poland are that we have a very religious country (catholic shit must die), as well as the false government which makes living in this country very hard.

How are things working out with Agonia Records? From what I've seen, Agonia does a great job promoting their bands and has lots of very good acts on their label. You must be pleased to be working with them.

Yeah! I'm sure that Agonia Records will become in the near future a serious professional label! I was in contact with Filip because he was interested in releasing the vinyl version of *The Burning Deed of Deceit* and we were also talking about the future of his label and his plans, etc. He just asked me if I'd like to sign with Agonia Records and I told him...yes! It's very positive that now we cooperate with the Polish label, because we are in regular contact with each other and we can just call one another anytime and discuss any details, etc. In March 2004 we plan to record our first album for Agonia Records and in May we'll probably go on a European tour to promote this album. It'll be our first tour ever and it'll be also organized by Agonia. Filip is a fan of the metal music and he's not just some fucking businessman and that's also a very important thing in my opinion. Support Agonia Records!

Other than music, what are you interested in? What are your hobbies, or studies you are involved in if any?

I read some books, I play guitar, I party with my friends, I visit some dark and mystic places and I love the long walks through the woods. Other than that I like to go to the fucking gym and I ride my bicycle...anything for a better physical condition. I also explore the German fortifications from WWII.

What's the black metal scene like in Poland? Can you recommend any new bands to the scene from Poland that are worth checking out?

INFERNAL WAR is the biggest hope for this scene I think! If you like black / death metal in the vein of MARDUK or ANGELCORPSE you should check them out! Besides, I think that the Polish Satanic black / thrash / death metal scene is now stronger than ever! Just listen to WITCHMASTER, AZARATH, ANIMA DAMNATA, SUPREME LORD, HELL-BORN and THRONEUM or DIE! About the pure black metal scene I think that it's almost dead and nothing can bring back the might of this scene from the beginning of 90's. Now there are many NSBM kids who think they are "evil" because they scream "sieg heil!" on the street. There are many jealous bastards who talk shit behind your back because you are just more serious then they are and let's say...more professional. Anyway, I just say fuck it and I do what I think is right for me and for my band and I don't care much about others.

Are you pleased with the direction the underground scene is going today? Do you think it has progressed?

I can't say that I'm satisfied with it. In the past there was something like a 'brotherhood' between the bands in the underground. Nowadays the underground has lost its true spirit in my opinion. I get really pissed when I see all those kids around who talk much shit, but don't know anything about it. And that's the reason why I'm not involved with it as much as in the past anymore. I now concentrate more on my own band before anything else.

Has* THUNDERBOLT *done any live performances? Do you think you will ever tour the US? If you were given the opportunity to tour, which countries would you like to tour and what bands would you like to tour with?

No, **THUNDERBOLT** has not played live yet. We'll go on tour in May 2004 to promote our next album. I'm sure we'll create a pure diabolical atmosphere during our gigs! We'll probably go on tour with TSJUDER and URGEHAL and we'll visit a few countries mostly in the West part of Europe. There are so many fucking killer bands I'd like to tour with. Just too much to mention! One day we'll invade your land and crush the Christian scum! It will be perfect, that's for sure!

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RATHER THAN DISBANDING **DIABOLIC**, BRIAN MALONE WORKED INCESSANTLY WITH NEW GUITARIST, ERIC HERSEMANN (EX-**LORD BLASPHEMER**), TO WRITE INFINITY THROUGH PURIFICATION - A RELEASE THAT'S ON PAR WITH THE RECENT EFFORTS OF **HATE ETERNAL** AND **VITAL REMAINS** IN TERMS OF QUALITY - WITHOUT YET HAVING A RHYTHM SECTION. ENTER FRENCH DRUMMER GAEL BARTHELEMY AND VOCALIST/BASSIST ED WEBB (WHO PLAYED BASS ON **DIABOLIC**'S SUPREME EVIL DEMO). THE BAND HAS FACED ITS TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, BUT BRIAN AND ERIC CONCUR THAT THE UNRELENTING WAR MACHINE IS ONLY BEGINNING TO TURN ITS WHEELS.

DIABOLIC

BY JAY GORANIA

PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

Pit: Brian, since you're the sole original member, many folks perceive you as being an Axl Rose. Would you like to clear the air?

Brian Malone: (laughs) I can see the perception. But it's actually opposite to what it would seem to be. The job qualifications and obligations of the departed members couldn't be met – whether it was due to performance, personality, traveling, or whatever. We could have ended things on good terms, but when Aantar got fired from the band for performing horribly in Europe, amongst other things, we put out a press release wishing him the best. And the next thing I know there's an unofficial press release from their camp saying all kinds of nasty, very untrue things. That pissed off not only me, but also our label, because they put the name of the label on the press release.

When you realized you were the remaining original member, what made you carry on with* DIABOLIC *rather than opting to start a new band or to join an existing one?

BM: One reason is because of the amount of effort I've put into it over the first six years. The other part being that, from our first conversation, I knew that Eric had the same attitude that I've had towards **DIABOLIC** since day one. I mean I have the name of the band tattooed on my arm. I live for this band. This band is a part of my very being. There was no way that I was going to let the inadequacies of other people – because of laziness or past mistakes they've made - slow down the ideals of this band. And on top of that, the new writing partner in Eric really inspired me, really fired me up and recharged me after years of being drained by the psychic vampires I was dealing with. I bent over backwards to help people who didn't really appreciate it. I really tried to keep things together, contrary to popular belief.

Eric Hersemann: We are very single-minded in our want to succeed. It's a high-pressure band. We demand nothing less than 100%. Once Gael got here, we jammed seven days a week for up to eight hours a day. We were going to Sonic Ranch (Studios) with Neil Kernon, so we wanted to go prepared for the ultimate professional.

What are your afterthoughts on your experience with Neil?

EH: We wanted fans to hear a live band on CD, not so much as it's in concert, but that it's fluidly played and not too sterilized and glassy, which happens with a lot of modern day death metal albums. It's just raw enough to sound real, and clear enough to hear everything that's going on while maintaining the heaviness, which is the most important thing. Neil has a knack for getting the ultimate natural drum tones – there are no triggers at all - and he's a guitarist with the ability to get guitars to sound great. Neil is just a brilliant man to work with. The reason we chose him is because there is no one better than him. There are others that are his equal in this genre, but he has a very individual, great sound.

I've got to be honest;* Vengeance Ascending *was an amazing album that I didn't think your old lineup could've topped, let alone a new lineup that I wasn't familiar with. But the end result is absolutely blistering. You have outdone yourself. Were you trying to prove a point when you were writing for this release?

EH: Both of us had a lot to prove with this album for many different reasons. Essentially, Brian and I had the goal to make a killer heavy metal album. We didn't want to hold ourselves back with any prerequisite sounds that this genre demands. We just let the writing flow, and it was smooth and easy. It's only going to get better in the future. This time we didn't have as much time as we wanted.

BM: There were no limits. We worked hard without having any arguments. It was refreshing that there were no egos in the way. I'm still the same humble guy you met in Texas. (laughs) I love metal, and I love to play metal.

What's the lyrical direction with this album?

EH: *Infinity Through Purification* represents **DIABOLIC** purified. With all of the negative influences and aspects of this band burned away, what was left was basically the solid steel structure. Lyrically, a lot of it is about inner strength as well as some dark fantasy and sorcery. And there's other stuff, including our hatred toward society. And the last song of the album, "Enter The Maelstrom," is a long metaphor about someone, like an unknowing friend, going to a death metal show for the first time.

It seems that a song like "Satanic Barbarism" would carry on the band's continuing war motif.

EH: There's definitely an element of war on this album, but it's not a war in the typical sense. It's a war against society's mainstream. When I write lyrics, I like story telling, so there's some of that in there. "Satanic Barbarism" is calling out to all the metal fans worldwide to reaffirm that you guys are into the right shit. There's a lot of crap out there, like the mainstream music media and mainstream bands. Death metal is the music business' dirty little secret. No one wants to admit that it exists and that people like it. Both of those things are true: it does exist and a lot of people do like it. It's a relatively smaller scene, but there is definitely a certain population of people of different ages, races, and sexes that love and live for this style of music. "Satanic Barbarism" is a call to arms, basically: stand up and be counted, because we're here and there are a lot of us. So let's kick some ass!

Metal is a lifestyle, not just a kind of music.

EH: Absolutely! A lot of people joke about it but, at its core, it's a very serious thing. And at some point, every metal fan got into it for the same reason. It's because they are sick of the bullshit that's out there, music and otherwise. Metal was always a refuge for the retard, much like punk rock. It's for all the people that no one else got. And that's what thrash was; it was a combination of the two. It just got heavier from there, and that's where we are now.

What new metal bands do you like – new as in N-E-W?

EH: I think one of the best bands in the world is RUNE. They're a grindcore band out of Ohio. They're excellent and creative.

BM: THE ABSENCE from Tampa sounds like a heavier version of old, melodic IN FLAMES, but it's done really well, and played with conviction. They're not on a label yet.

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FIREBALL MINISTRY

BY MICHA KITE

SINCE THE EARLY NINETIES I'VE HEARD PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT THE STATE OF ROCK MUSIC AND WHO COULD BLAME THEM? "COMPLAINT" AND "ANGRY CHICK" ROCK DOMINATED THE AIRWAVES, WHILE THE CORPORATE WHORES FORCE-FED THIS BULLSHIT ONTO US, KEEPING THE TRUE ARTISTS DOWN BUT NOT OUT. FESTERING IN A GARAGE SOMEWHERE IN LOS ANGELES WAS A LITTLE BAND BY THE NAME OF **FIREBALL MINISTRY**, WHO NOT ONLY STARTED THEIR OWN MINISTRY BUT HAVE QUITE A CONGREGATION. IT IS ON THIS DOORSTEP THAT I SAY TO YOU REPENT AND PREPARE YOUR SOULS FOR THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING!

Pit: Hey brother, what's up? You sound like you're at a club?

Rev. James A. Rota: Actually I'm in the middle of Idaho and I had to stop at a rest stop to give you a call cause there ain't *no* cell service out here!

Well let's get on it then! With each release you guys seem to keep climbing the corporate ladder.

We started off on Bong Load Records, which at the time was great for us, but its kinda like as you outgrow your pants, you kinda move up and up. I think we found a good home at Nuclear Blast because they have the power of a major label in the important areas but you don't have to deal with that major label BS. When we handed our record to Nuclear Blast no one was saying, "I don't know, I don't hear a single".

The band comes off fairly independent anyway...

As far as the vision of the band and how we've operated for quite a while now, we've been able to call our own shots and we're used to that. It's like, just because no one was paying attention didn't mean we weren't going to keep doing what we do, and now through perseverance people are paying attention so, yeah I would say we are a pretty self sustaining entity.

You've got the whole MTV coverage thing happening and I gotta ask, is that the work of a publicist, you bumping elbows, or just being yourselves?

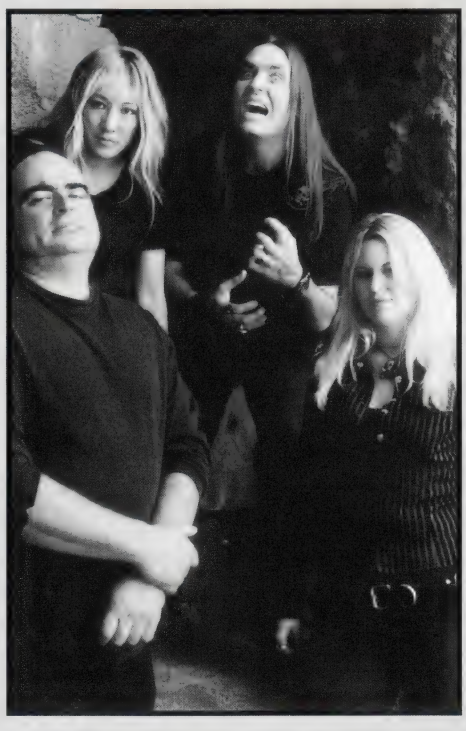
Iann Robinson took a liking to the band and it was one of those things where we lucked out, as far as that goes. I mean he could be championing any band at this point but he picked us because I think he knows that what we do is true to heart and we put everything we have into it emotionally and financially. I like to say we run a non-profit organization that doesn't take any donations...

As well as non-denominational?

Exactly...

Right on, you mentioned coming up with a single and I gotta admit you guys can write a mean hook. On the defense, some say this album is too poppy.

We're not a jam band and never have been. We like to write songs that people will remember and by people saying things like we've strayed away from our roots, I mean my roots are bands like AC/DC, KISS and GRAND FUNK RAILROAD, and all those bands wrote songs you know? I mean GRAND FUNK covered "Locomotive" for Christ's sake! It's just good times, rock and roll music and I'm not trying to impress anyone with my guitar playing and we're not trying to jam for twenty five minutes because we're just not that kind of band.



NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA

DEATH/GORE/GRIND PIONEERS **SEPSISM** HAVE BEEN FIXTURES OF THE UNDERGROUND FOR 13 YEARS, QUIETLY TOURING THE WORLD AND RELEASING NOW-CLASSIC DEMOS LIKE "SEVERE CARNAL BUTCHERY," WHILE POPPING UP IN COUNTLESS FANZINES AND ON COMPILATIONS. THEY'VE BEEN CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED FOR A STYLE DESCRIBED AS RAW AND GORY, CATCHY YET MORBID, SICKENINGLY BRUTAL AND NEVER BORING. NOW, WITH A DEFINITIVE NEW CD, TO PREVAIL IN DISGUST ON THE DISPLEASED LABEL, THIS UNCOMPROMISING AND RESPECTED CALIFORNIA-BASED BAND IS RAISING ITS PROFILE, GAINING NEW FANS AND PLAYING MORE SHOWS THAN EVER.

SEPSISM

BY JON "K" KONJOYAN

Pit: For readers who are just discovering your band, how would you describe your sound and image?

Leon Morrison: I would describe **SEPSISM**'s sound as angry, violent, and pounding yet catchy. A blend of modern death metal and classic death metal as well as grind and lots of other influences mixed in. We have always concentrated on writing songs that are memorable and have good hooks in them, but at the same time we like to keep things heavy as fuck. I try to only use riffs that invoke some kind of reaction in me, riffs that make me want to fucking break shit. And I think that intensity comes across in our songs, especially on the new CD. As far as image goes, we don't have any gimmick like a lot of bands today. We are a death metal band and we believe in staying true to our roots. There is a reason why it's called death metal, so the subject matter of our lyrics have always revolved around the darker side of human existence.

SEPSISM was born back in 1990. Were you guys doing anything musical before the band formed?

I joined **SEPSISM** in 1993, and had a couple bands before that, but nothing really serious—just friends from school jamming. Fernando (Avila) and Phillip (Hernandez) grew up next door to each other and they had other bands before becoming **SEPSISM**.

The L.A. scene today seems healthy, with lots of active bands and a hot, new website (launderground.com) to help publicize them. What was the scene like back when SEPSISM began?

I remember the scene actually being a lot stronger then. Shows always had a good turnout even at the local shows; it was definitely the hay day for death metal back then. We used to play a lot more shows with big acts because we fell into the whole "pay to play" thing that seems to be a part of the metal scene in Hollywood. But I think things are coming back around again. There is no shortage of great bands from L.A. and there is still a good amount of shows even though most of the bigger acts that come to California on tour are part of a package that leaves little or no room on the bill for local bands.

You guys have helped pave the way musically for numerous extreme bands. You must feel some sense of pride for having influenced a lot of bands, no?

To be honest, we have been around for a long time and I am sure that we have influenced people and bands and we do get a lot of respect from other bands. Almost everyone that I have met from a band owns a copy of *Severe Carnal Butchery*. But I don't know about paving the way for them. I take pride in the fact that people enjoy our music because it has not always been easy to keep **SEPSISM** going. We have been through our fair share of bullshit, but this is what we do.

Speaking of other bands, I know you have a diverse list of influences/favorites. Name some of them.

For me, personally, I grew up listening to metal and classic rock. My stepfather played guitar in a metal band. I was always searching for heavier and heavier shit to listen to. Bands like IRON MAIDEN, METALLICA, and SLAYER probably started it for me. I listened to all the thrash metal and speed metal bands that were out there during that time. Then it was bands like CARCASS and AUTOPSY, NAPALM DEATH, TERRORIZER, DEATH, OBITUARY, GRAVE, SUFFOCATION—the list goes on and on. Fernando and Phillip have a lot more punk and hardcore influence.

By 1992, you guys experienced several lineup changes, yet stayed dedicated to a style of music that was hardly trendy. What kept you going?

The core of **SEPSISM** is Phillip (drums) and Fernando (vocals) and it is them that kept **SEPSISM** going after those first lineup changes. They just stayed dedicated to what they created and I think that just comes from a love for the music. After I joined, we've still been having lineup changes and we forge on. The band is more then just a hobby for us. It's our lifestyle and how we express ourselves.

In 2000, you embarked on your first ever European tour. What were some of the highlights or lowlights of that adventure?

The whole experience was awesome for us. We really did not know what to expect, but the shows were great and the fans were very diehard. And we made a lot of friends. The bands we toured with, INTERVAL BIZARRE and SANATORIUM, were really fucking cool people. The only complaints that I would have were the traveling conditions and the weather. We went in March, so places like Germany were fucking cold as fuck. But that's a small price to pay, and just part of the whole deal when it comes to touring.

I've always been impressed that your success and growth has been on your own terms. The "pay to play" phenomenon that you mentioned earlier is one issue that you have strong feelings about. Care to share them?

When we released our third demo, *Severe Carnal Butchery*, we were playing almost every death metal tour that would come to California. There was one promoter who owned a club and he would rent out places like the Whisky or Roxy and national bands would come and do two or three shows in California for him. The way it would work is every fucking local band would be trying to get on the bill so he would pick and choose what bands he wanted to play and give each of them 100 tickets to sell. Whoever sold the most tickets got to play closer to the headlining band. Ninety percent of the time bands would just buy the whole hundred tickets and get the best spot, while we would hustle and sell 60 or 70 and end up playing first. Now the way it works is each time slot available has a set amount of tickets that you have to sell and if you don't sell them all you have to buy them. The promoters really don't give a fuck who the bands are or how long they have been around. They just want the money and it makes it really hard for bands trying to get exposure. As for us, we just choose not to play those shows. Instead, we play smaller clubs mostly promoted by people that have been part of the L.A. underground scene for years. I think the whole pay to play thing is just bullshit and it's poisoning the scene.

Your new CD is arguably the most sophisticated and satisfying SEPSISM CD to date. Was recording this disc a new experience for you in any way?

We recorded at a friend's studio, so it was a lot more hands-on than in the past. It was just us and an engineer. We were close to home, so it was a comfortable environment. We were really enthusiastic and excited to get this album recorded and released. We knew that the songs were very strong. We could not wait to get it all recorded, hear what the songs sounded like with the second guitar track added, all the harmonies and punches and stuff. *To Prevail In Disgust* was our opportunity to show where **SEPSISM** is now, musically and lyrically. When we released *Purulent Decomposition* it was really just a compilation of old songs from our first two demos and songs from our unreleased fourth demo, "Necrotic Flesh Rot." So that album as a whole did not really represent where we were currently at. But now with this release, I think people will hear the natural progression and growth.

What advice would you give to up and coming bands who would like to follow in your footsteps?

Keep your integrity. Play what you want to play and fuck what anyone has to say about it. Trends come and go even in metal, so you are better off playing what makes you happy than trying to play whatever is popular at the time.

DISPLEASED RECORDS

DIABOLIC

INFINITY THROUGH PURIFICATION

Diabolic have triumphantly returned with a rejuvenated lineup and pummeling new album. *Infinity Through Purification* is a blistering offering that pushes the musical boundaries beyond what was previously thought humanly possible. - Producer Neil Kernon (Cannibal Corpse, Nevermore, Testament)

FLESHGRIND

MURDER WITHOUT END

The Chicago-based Fleshgrind have returned after a three-year hiatus with their most volatile offering to date. *Murder Without End* is a savage ten-track unrelenting extreme metal assault that will mercilessly beat you to death.

ABORTED

GOREMAGEDDON
THE SAW AND THE CARNAGE DONE

On *Goremageddon*, the Belgian quintet's third full-length album, the puveryors of gore cook up some of the most devastating, putrid and perverted death metal mankind can bare!

WITHERED EARTH

OF WHICH THEY BLEED

Of Which They Bleed displays punishing blast beats combined with dark and heavy guitar riffs that evolve into an atmospheric assault keeping the listener always guessing what exactly will hit them next. Take all preconceived notions regarding American death metal and throw them out the window. Artwork by Derek Hess, produced by Bill Korecky.

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THE CROWN

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

PHOTO BY SNOWY SHAW

THREE YEARS AGO I WAS BLOWN AWAY BY THE ALBUM DEATHRACE KING BY **THE CROWN**. IT STANDS AS A FANTASTIC SLAB OF SWEDISH MELODIC DEATH METAL AND ONE OF THE MOST OVER LOOKED AND UNDERRATED RELEASES IN YEARS. VOCALIST JOHAN LINDSTRAND QUIT THE BAND TO BE REPLACED BY FORMER AT THE GATES VOCALIST TOMAS LINDBERG. A DREAM PAIRING FOR SURE, CONSIDERING THE INFLUENCE LINDBERG'S FORMER BAND HAD ON THE YOUNGER SWEDES. AFTER RELEASING THE ULTRA FAST CROWNED IN TERROR WITH LINDBERG, HE WAS PROMPTLY EJECTED TO BE REPLACED BY HIS PREDECESSOR, JOHAN LINDSTRAND. WITH THE ORIGINAL LINE UP INTACT, THEY HAVE JUST RELEASED POSSESSED 13. I SPOKE TO GUITARIST MARKO TERVONEN ABOUT THEIR NEW ALBUM AND THEIR SWITCHING VOCAL POSITION.

***Pit: Maybe we could back up and go over the switching singer position in* THE CROWN?**

Marko Tervonen: The reason why Johan originally left was for personal reasons. All our tours were financial disasters. We toured with CANNIBAL CORPSE in the US and THE HAUNTED in Europe. The tours work out very bad because you have to pay to be on tour. Johan was very tired of making no money and he wanted a normal life. But when he was away from the band for about a year he felt the band was really important to him. We were together since we were 15, so it was the classic thing, you don't miss it until it's gone.

When you did the* Crowned In Terror *album with Tomas Lindberg, Johan was having second thoughts?

Yeah, exactly. I met him from time to time. And we realized how important that **THE CROWN** should be the five of us because it has always been the five of us. The reason we wanted to end the relationship with Tomas was personal chemistry. It just wasn't the same. After we fired Tomas we had these two festival shows we had to do, so I asked Johan to help us out. Then afterwards we talked and I asked him if he wanted to rejoin permanently, and he said hell yes! Now he's the one with the most energy and he's like, we have to tour everywhere!

There were the stories of Tomas drinking too much and that's why he was out of the band.

Tomas always delivered live and in the studio, but it just wasn't the same chemistry. The things you appreciate in the end are the little things. Yeah the comments about the drinking things are on our web page. Everything just blew out of proportion, so if people want to read about it, go to our website (www.thecrownonline.com)

Over this summer I saw* THE CROWN *at the Wacken Open Air festival. How was that?

That was something that was very amazing for us. We played at 3:00 in the daytime so I was nervous. But the support from the audience was amazing. That was one of those shows I will remember for a very long time.

That was before* Possessed 13. *Let's talk about the new album. Things are a little different for you on this album. The title is unusual.

Well we realized we've been playing for 13 years, so it's sort of our celebration. We've been possessed for 13 years. First came the title, and then we decided we should have 13 tracks on the album and then 13 tracks on the bonus CD.

The album cover is pretty unique; it reminds me of an old Mario Bava horror film.

Yeah we are very proud of it. It's a bit different from the typical death metal album. A friend of Magnus worked on all the artwork for 6 months. It was Magnus who thought of the idea of having like a 70's horror movie theme to the album. When we saw the picture we were like hells yeah. I know that in the US the cover is black, right?

Yeah. What color is it in Europe?

It's white. They are both pretty cool actually. In Europe the black version is the double digipack and the white one is the single disc version. The US one is the black artwork without the digipack but with the bonus disc.

The songs are slightly different too. The songs are a bit slower for* THE CROWN. *It sounds like some of the older material off your first two albums.

Yeah. There's an explanation for that. For this album we emptied our riff banks. There are some really old riffs from like '93 and '94 that we mixed with new riffs. Some past songs that we never released we took some of those riffs. And there are some slower songs.

I was wondering if maybe you just felt you couldn't get any faster after the* Crowned In Terror *LP?

Yeah, it is very fast. Also I think that this album is less melodic also. I know for *Crowned In Terror*, I wanted to have a melody on every chorus. For this album I didn't do that. We tuned down our guitars for this album too, so I think this album is heavier. It has a cool mixture of heaviness and we are damn proud of it.

The albums tracks are broken up into three sections, Initiation, Exultation, and Annihilation. Is there any significance?

Well, it works as separate parts. The idea came out when we decided to go with the 70's horror theme. There was an idea to have instrumentals to create atmosphere. Then someone had the idea to break it into three parts like they do in the theater. To be honest, it's more of a cool thing, than a deep idea.

Interesting song titles on here. "Are You Morbid" and "Kill Em All" instantly remind you of CELTIC FROST and METALLICA.

Well "Kill Em All" was pretty obvious because it's so obvious that it sounds like "Hit the Lights" or "Phantom Lord". It's one of our little tributes. "Are You Morbid" was a coincidence. We didn't know about Tom G Warrior's book title. But I'm pretty damn sure Magnus had CELTIC FROST in the back of his head, but it has nothing to do with the band.

The song "Face of Destruction, Deep Hit of Death" is going to be the video, right?

Yeah, it turned out very good. It's pretty simple. It's just us kicking ass in a warehouse with some cool digital effects. I'm glad Metal Blade wanted to do it because it came out really good.

You have the video, the extra bonus disc with the new CD; it seems like Metal Blade are really behind you.

Yeah they are. I've heard horror stories from other bands. This is our last album on this contract, but they have been very good to us. Metal Blade has done the opposite. For this album, they added $10,000 to our budget to go buy some equipment. And the contact with our offices is just amazing. I'm amazed at what they have done for us. Metal Blade deserves full respect.

I think it's a great idea for the fans to have the free bonus disc with the new album.

Yeah it is. Like six months ago I found some copies of our old demo tapes, so we sold them on our website. So when Metal Blade came to us to do a bonus disc, we said, let's give them everything. It even has our very first recording, which wasn't even on our demo, so it really is for the fans.

***So next up is that Johan is going to re-record the vocals for* Crowned In Terror?**

Yeah. We're working on it now and then we leave for a tour, so we will pick up on it when we get back.

Is it just the vocals or are you doing anything else to it?

The vocals and maybe the bass as well. We will remix it as well. It will be coming out through Metal Blade. It's a bit of an ego thing because it is totally important to show how **THE CROWN** is really the five of us. But I don't think anyone has done something like this. Some people asked my why were doing this. I was like wouldn't you want to hear *Formulas Fatal to the Flesh* with David Vincent?

***Yeah it's a great idea. Now I read an interview with Magnus where he said that this might be the last album from* THE CROWN?**

That's a bit of a misunderstanding. For this album we have really emptied all our ideas so after this we must start from scratch. Around the album *Hell Is Here*, we wrote shit loads of songs. We had written too many songs so now we have to start from scratch so none of us are sure how it will sound.

So it's not your farewell album?

No nothing like that. But with the bonus songs too, we really wanted to empty everything out.

You have a European tour line up, when will you be back to the US?

We are really thinking about doing both North and South America in early 2004. I really think that we are going to tour a lot for this album. We're really looking to headline.

IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY YEAR ANOTHER "BUZZ" BAND SPITS FORTH FROM THE UNDERGROUND TOWARDS NEAR MAINSTREAM SUCCESS.

AKERCOCKE

BY CHRISTOPHER ALO

Pit: Originally* AKERCOCKE *started out as SALEM ORCHID, right?

Jason Mendonca: SALEM ORCHID started out as David Gray, the drummer and lyricist for **AKERCOCKE,** with me around 1988. SALEM ORCHID was the first band where we wanted to take things seriously. We had very grand ideas but we didn't have the skills to carry them out. As time wore on, SALEM ORCHID disintegrated because we ended up at odds with one another. Around 1991, I left the band. David and I met again in 1996 and we realized there was unfinished business and that was blasting, or the primordial feeling of the blast. After many glasses of ale we came up with the name **AKERCOCKE** and that was the start of the band. We had the name before we had any music or any other band members. By late 1996 we recruited Scanlan and Theobalds and so the band was born. In 1999 we released *Rape of the Bastard Nazarene* and in 2001 we released *The Goat of Mendes*.

The name of the band* AKERCOCKE *is quite unusual. It gets pronounced so many different ways.

Absolutely, we hear all sorts of different permutations of it. But it is pronounced acker-cock-uh. We don't mind how people say it, it all works fine (laughs).

Now you got the name from Faust, correct?

Yeah it was from a contemporary re-telling of the Faust story by a British author named Robert Nye. His books are quite funny and almost blasphemous. In it there is a capuchin monkey, which is disgusting and vile, and it acquires speech and can say words like "devil" and "hell". The monkey cannot be killed because he comes from Mephistopheles so he is indestructible. We were laughing about this story in the pub. We thought yeah, that works. Indestructible and from hell, we'll call the band **AKERCOCKE** (laughs).

Your paths have crossed quite a bit with CRADLE OF FILTH right?

Yeah a funny story with the name is one of the first times we played with them. The soundman at the venue came up to us and said, "What was your name again"? We told him and he said, "yeah you guys sound all right, but the first thing you have to do is change that fucking name" (laughs). Also Paul Ryan who was the founding guitar player in CRADLE OF FILTH is our manager.

Chronozon is just an amazing album. There was no info on the sleeve as far as production credits.

We recorded the album in our own facility in London over the course of a year. We would do a few hours here and a few hours there. I mean the drums were recorded in February of 2002. I finished the vocals in December of 2002. Neal Kernon then mixed it.

So wasn't it more than a year that you were working on this album?

Well if you include mixing it yeah, then it did. It just sat in the can because we were determined that we didn't want to mix it at our place. When we hooked up with Earache Records, they suggested Neal Kernon. We thought he would be the guy for the job. So David and I came to the US for the first time and we brought the master tapes over and went to Sonic Ranch down in Texas. Neal mixed the album and did just a fantastic job. I feared that we would have to mix it ourselves and to have him do it and elevate to those levels was just superb. I think he's given it a great sheen.

Absolutely.* Chronozon *seems to be the most dynamic of the three* AKERCOCKE *albums, would you agree?

It is a pretty diverse record. There are a lot of light shades in there. We couldn't do another *Goat of Mendes* album because it would be just totally boring. We've all got eclectic tastes as musician and some of those elements are shining in. It's also a very honest record. Before we recorded our first album we really hadn't been listening to that much new heavy metal, we were all sort of immersed in our own thing. We didn't have a clue what was going on. So we just drew from our old influences like AUTOPSY, POSSESSED, KILLING JOKE, SUFFOCATION and VOIVOD. When we did the second album we had heard what was going on in the contemporary black metal scene and I think some of that rubbed off on us. So when we came to the new album, *Chronozon*, it was like a back to the shed kind of vibe. We focused on making music for us. I think that's why it is a bit more diverse.

The songs are all epics and have such complex song structures. How long does it take to write these songs?

A long time. Sometimes they just vomit forth (laughs). We've become more and more concerned with the song writing, and we are not concerned about being the fastest or the most brutal.

Are they difficult to replicate live?

No, because we take so long to write them, we have played them so many bloody times that the live scenario is not so bad. Sometimes all the blasting is a bit of a challenge though.

But this album shows that you have progressed beyond just blast beats. The more melodic parts really offset the ultra brutal parts quite well. You can only go so far by playing a million beats an hour and grunting.

I agree entirely. After a while it all just sort of blends and ceases to lose its extremity. I'm all for these bands that are all out blast maniacs like MORTICIAN. I dig bands like that, but it doesn't hold my attention as a musician.

The back of the CD lists you as "satanic metal" or "occult metal," but nowhere on there does it mention you being black metal. Are you trying to branch out from that tag? Certainly* Chronozon *proves that you are more than just a black metal band.

We've never really thought about a tag for ourselves. There's always been the debate of "are they black or are they death"? I don't mind how people label us. But I think the core is that we are just a heavy metal band and that's what is most important. We might weird out sometimes and go into some strange esoteric areas. But the core thing is that we are just heavy metal.

The whole black/death walls do seem to be coming down more and more. CRADLE OF FILTH certainly likes to be referred to as "extreme metal" as opposed to black metal as well.

Yeah people love to put bands in boxes. And particularly here in the UK they are fanatical about it. I'm sure you are aware of the infinitesimal sub genres in metal and hardcore. It doesn't really matter to me. If someone wants to hammer me for a category, I just tell them, we are a heavy metal band.

I know the band are full-on Satanists, and many songs have Satan-themed titles. Are the band members Lavey-styled Satanists or something else?

Well, certainly we take a lot of ideas, not for the purpose of creation but for existence. Dr. Lavey's writing has been influential. But most of our songs are inspired by poetry. David writes a lot about the power of sex and sex magick. And the powers of Satan through sex, and of the power of the union with woman. These are constant recurring themes within the band. When he's ranting and raving about summoning demons, for us it's all romantic imagery. If you asked me seriously, I would tell you that's for fruitcakes and not the pragmatic real world of modern Satanism.

The look of the band is fantastic. Whose idea was it to perform in business suits?

Well in my daily life I'm usually the collar-and-tie type of guy. So, if I'm digging in the garden or going to see my favorite band, I won't be wearing the suit and tie. But we figured it would be more honest to present ourselves the way we really are. If I were to put on my favorite IRON MAIDEN T-shirt and jeans and combat boots to just go play a gig, it would be weird and dishonest.

So when will we see you mount your first US tour?

Well I'm hoping that's going to happen very soon. There's some talk about coming to the US and we are just gagging to do that. We just want to come over there and blast for our heavy metal brothers.

Artists of the Macabre

By Kelli Malella

For this issue's Artists of the Macabre, I had the chance to speak to Rob Middleton, who has worked on various covers for NAPALM DEATH (which he is best known for), and also worked with artists like STAMPIN' GROUND, MEDULLA NOCTE, HELLCHILD, DISCORDANCE AXIS, SUBMERGE, and DISFEAR. Art has always been a passion for Rob and was the only subject he really enjoyed and paid much attention to while at school. "I suppose the first time I really realized it was something I could seriously pursue, and that others were actually interested in the stuff I was doing, was when I first got asked to design a record cover for someone other than my own band." Rob never really made a conscious decision about being an artist for covers; he just knew it was something that he had to do. "It's a need; I just have to get it out and into the world. I never had any specific career dreams or goals as a kid. I remember how infuriated the career officer used to get at school when they used to ask what I wanted to do with my life and I just used to sullenly shrug and look at the floor. Being an artist is a pretty good excuse not to get a 'real job', ha ha, although I'm still struggling to actually make a living out of it."

Pit: Did you have to go to a school to learn the method of art that you use?
Rob Middleton: No, not really. I did go to art school and have done numerous other arts courses. I didn't actually do my degree (Visual Studies) until I was just into my 30's though, which I'm glad about as I think I appreciated it a lot more than I would have done when I was 17 or something. Although I had the freedom to experiment with a lot of skills and techniques I think the main thing I got from the experience of art school was the ability to think and generally work with an open mind. Most of the techniques I use in my work now are all self taught.

What would you recommend for people that are interested in getting into graphic arts?
Well, if they want to get into the more commercial side of it, then take the graphic design or illustration route, like I mentioned before. Of course it's not essential to go through the whole Art School system and I know it's not for everyone. I like learning and I'm a bit of a terminal student. Otherwise, just be constantly receptive to all forms of visual inspiration. Make the effort to see what's out there. Don't be too blinkered in your expectations, keep an open mind and be willing to both take risks and compromise. Common sense I guess. More than anything I suppose is to have self-belief in yourself, which isn't really that easy as generally we're all our own worst critics. But you have to be determined and prepared to take the constant knock backs.

What style would you say you have when it comes to your art?
I really have no idea. Because I now have such a large collection of my own work over the years, gathering it all together on my website, I can see a kind of thread and unity within it all, but I'd find it very difficult to explain it in words to anyone. I certainly didn't set out to have any particular style but eventually I guess my own personality (artistically) comes through in the work. I think people can now recognize something I've done. And I've been told sometimes that other artists' work looks like my 'style', which is flattering. All I can think is that I guess it's a little twisted (laughs).

How do you get your images to come out the way they do?
Hmm, a difficult question. It all depends on what medium I'm working in with a particular piece of work. Generally I'm always looking to push and mutate things. I'm very interested in layering images and working with distressed surfaces, I like to give an image a sense of history. Much of the work I make is collage-based so it's mixing and matching different elements, textures etc. Pushing the boundaries, watching something metamorphosis into something different. I'm fascinated by anatomy; I like the idea of breaking down elements and reassembling them into something new.

I see that you use many different mediums when creating your art. Do you prefer one method to the others or do you just use what you can to get the best image possible?
Yes I try to remain open minded and flexible. Generally I get bored doing the same thing over and over. If I've been stuck in front of the computer for weeks just working with PhotoShop or tied up doing some small, intricate pen and ink illustration then I find it very liberating to get down my studio and work on a eight foot wax sculpture, or do a five foot charcoal drawing or something. Sometimes elements of this larger work ends up being photographed and then scanned into a digital illustration, or similarly I've printed up digital work, blown it up and mounted it in large, fine artworks. It's all cross-pollination. I like to try and keep things fresh and vary the way I work.

What are some of your favorite or most memorable covers that you have had the chance to work on? Why?
I didn't get my computer until 1999, up until

that time I was mainly working in paint and ink. All the collage and image manipulation I did was by abusing photocopiers etc. The last cover I did, in the much more labor-intensive style, was the STAMPIN' GROUND *An Expression of Repressed Violence* album cover. I worked on that for weeks, did a lot of preliminary studies (something that's not so important in the digital age, what with unlimited undo's, etc), and the final piece was really quite detailed and complex. Looking back at it now I'm still quite amazed that I actually painted that. It's definitely one of my favorites but also represents a definite shift in the way I work. Another particular favorite (probably from around the same time) was the NAPALM DEATH *Leaders not Followers* cover. This marked quite a departure from the normal style I did for them. Basically they needed something at the last minute and ended up using some photo-based work (manipulated in the darkroom, pre-computer). This was actually part of some personal work I was working on at the time at Art School. The main reason I like it is for its simplicity. It's a very simple, yet striking image. One of my main faults is that I sometimes overwork an image; it's that problem of not knowing when to stop. But I like the bleak, minimal feel of these images. I think I'd like to do some more stuff like that now actually.

Any new covers in the making that you can tell me about?
At the moment I'm working on a CD cover for Texas grind band KILL THE CLIENT, I've also just redesigned an old logo for a cover of a reissue of the WARHAMMER (Shane from NAPALM DEATH's old band) demo on CD. Stuff in the immediate pipeline is a 7" cover illustration for SUMMON THE CROWS (political hardcore from Norway) and VOICE OF HATE (Death grind from Spain)

Tell me about the process when a band or label comes to you asking you to create cover art for them.
Well there are lots of things to take into consideration before I can start to actually work on the art. I generally direct them to the 'frequently asked questions' on my website so I don't have to go through the same stuff over and over, stuff like how many images they need, for what format, in what style or media, budget if they have one, deadline, etc. Sometimes it feels like it's more complicated than it needs to be, but I've learned there are lots of little details that have to be straightened out before I can get stuck into the fun bit of making the artwork. What I'll then find out is if they have any specific ideas or concept, often I ask for lyrics or song titles to work from. Generally the whole process is very much two-way. I'll email rough drafts back and forth before I do the final work. This is a lot easier now that I work mainly digitally, as it means I can do endless variations on one theme before a final composition is chosen.

When you are asked to work on a band's cover, where do you get the ideas?
I literally get the idea from everywhere. I'm always on the lookout for inspiration and I find it from an infinite number of sources. From books I've read, film, TV, magazines, inspiration from other artists, but mostly just from the everyday world. I carry a camera with me almost everywhere so if I see something that I think I could use in some work at some point, even if it's just some old junk or a crumbling wall surface, I can capture it for reference. I've a huge mass of photographs and stuff I've cut from magazines. Once I've got some vague ideas in the back of my head, I have a huge brainstorming session and go through all my reference material or go out to search for items I need, go to take more photos or raid the library.

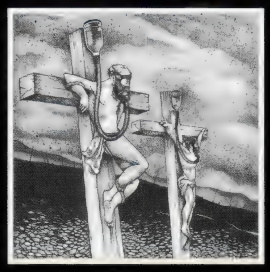
Once I've got a basic heap of stuff to work with I just play about with it all and let it grow and develop from there. Sometimes it all comes together quite easily, other times it's a huge frustrating struggle. I have to say getting the initial idea is the hardest part, once I finally know what I want to do making the final artwork seems to be comparatively quite easy.

Do you have to listen to the band's music first to get an idea of what you would like to do or is it more general, where you show them a portfolio that they can pick art from?

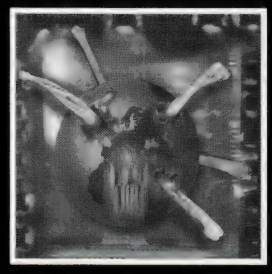
Obviously if possible I like to able to hear the band first. I think I'm quite good at matching a particular type of image, or a mood to a style of music. I do direct them to the galleries on my website and ask if there's any particular images that they like the look of, in as much as the style or feel of the artwork they like. I don't have 'spare' work that they can pick; I always work specifically for a band. Thankfully bands generally know what I'm about before they approach me. I'm pretty much open to anything but I'm definitely more suited to working with dark and heavy stuff. I'm not sure I'd be the obvious choice for an up tempo ska, pop-punk band for example, but hey…I'm always up for a challenge.

What is your main objective when creating a piece of work for a band?

Well, obviously the main objective is for the band to like it. It's going to be on their release and they're paying for it. Ultimately it'd be great that I like it too, which is generally the case, but there have been exceptions. I've long since learned the art of compromise, but it can be very frustrating when I've completed what I think is a perfect cover and then the band says, "Well it's okay but can you just remove such and such element", which is usually the strongest and most pivotal part of the cover, and have me replace it with some really cheesy idea..Generally, I'll say if I don't think something is going to work, or if I think something will look particularly lame, but at the end of the day it's their call, I'm working for them. Ultimately though, I like to finish with something that we both like and that I think totally sums up the feeling of that particular release. It's a great feeling when that happens and I still get a massive buzz about seeing my artwork on CD's and records.



Do you let the band have a say in what you create or do you just say, "Here is what I can come up with…like it or leave it"?



Well, as I've answered in the previous questions, I work very much with the bands. I think if I just adopted a 'like it or leave it' attitude, my work would soon become very stale. At least this way I get lots of input and it often leads to new ideas or approaches I wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

Is this your dream job or do you plan on working in different medium?

Working within visual media is what I love doing. At the moment though financially it's still very sporadic and I often have to get dull day jobs to pay the bills, which is frustrating as it drastically cuts into the time I can spend on my art. As well as doing cover art for bands, I also spend a lot of time just making personal artwork, which I exhibit, and also take on personal commissions for people's houses, etc. I've got a studio in a co-op run group studios in the center of town, so it's good to be able to work within a group environment. I'm certainly open to moving into other areas and media; I like to keep an open mind. I have no set plans at the moment; I'll just see where things lead. Obviously to be able to survive doing something I enjoy is my ultimate aim.

Are you a total metal head?

Ha, Ha. Well I do listen to lots of metal and always have done, and obviously worked with metal bands and labels but my background is primarily within the punk scene. I grew up on punk and hardcore and the whole philosophy that goes with it still pretty much defines me as a person. But the band I play in now, BAIT, mixes punk and hardcore with a big twisted metal edge, as have all the bands I've played in before, DEVIATED INSTINCT and SPINE WRENCH. There's always been a healthy crossover between the different genres but ultimately I shall always be a punk at heart.

Do you find that your inspiration comes from music and if it doesn't where does it come from?

Mostly yes, the two go hand in hand. For me it's an ultimate form of expression, in many ways I'm expressing the same things through my art and through my music. I listen to music almost 24-7; I'm always after new exciting and inspirational stuff. As I said before I do get inspired from all things around me, but music and art are my two driving passions. I always work to music and it can definitely help shape a particular piece of work.

Rob Middleton — bonehive@hotmail.com
"The Bonehive" — http://home.freeuk.net/bonehive/
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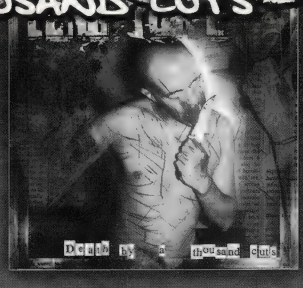

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Music Reviews

BLEEDING THROUGH – *This is Love, This is Murderous* – Trustkill Records

Put this one on and take cover. All I can say is, holy shit, this is a vicious slab of unrelenting metalcore. I couldn't think of a better name for this band because the music, lyrics, and cover art are drenched in blood, something akin to savage musical mutilation. Metalcore is too restrictive of a term. While the term is adequate as a generic description, the sextet does an impeccable job of combining the aggression of hardcore with metallic arrangements that are interesting, razor sharp, and utterly devastating, all wrapped up in a delivery that is tight as hell. This is more metal than anything else. Brandan's tough guy vocals bring to mind the coarse style of someone like KILLSWITCH ENGAGE's Howard Jones, amplified with bloodlust and unmitigated violence. Marta provides keyboards/electronics, but not in an overwhelming sense; the use of keys is spare, providing just a hint of atmosphere that never gets in the way of the knife throwing guitar work. There are even bits of Swedish melodic death metal in some of the six-string harmony parts. During the few songs where clean, almost emo, vocals are used, nothing is taken away from the brutality of the delivery. In fact, rather than squelching momentum, the approach simply adds accent and variety. Sporting titles like "Love lost in a Hail of Gunfire" and "Mutilation," don't expect to find peace, love, or understanding on *This is Love, This is Murderous*. There is no safe haven, only the screams of a listener held captive and tortured without remorse. – Scott Alisoglu BLEEDING THROUGH: www.bleedingthrough.com Trustkill Records: 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724 USA www.trustkill.com

DEFLESHED – *Royal Straight Flush* – The End Records

Wow! This album blew one of my speakers! Incredibly fast drumming, supported by the high end crunch of the guitars, and grating, throaty vocals. This is a brilliant mixture of style and influence and an excellent spin on the death / thrash genre. Impressively thick sound for a three-piece unit. DEFLESHED serve up eleven savage tracks that are a total blast. Play this shit loud and long! If you haven't yet heard of this band, pick up this album. Highly recommended for fans of Swedish thrash in the vein of the HAUNTED. – Kurt Krueger DEFLESHED: www.defleshed.com The End Records: 331 Rio Grande #58, SLC, UT 84101 USA www.theendrecords.com

GHOUL – *Maniaxe* – Razorback Records

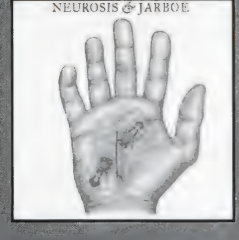
This is not only one of the best Razorback releases I've heard, but one of the best albums of the year. GHOUL assaults the listener with some killer thrash, sprinkled with bits of death metal. The lyrical content and cover art reminds me of THE MISFITS, making for a complete masterpiece of an album. The vocals stay largely in higher-pitched thrash territory, while low and mid-range death growls punctuate the songs. The thrash influence shines through with cutting riff attacks and good 'ole guitar solos, but the style does not sound overly old-school because of the effective use of blast beats, vocal variety, and a punk attitude that runs through the whole thing. You'll want to read the lyrics on this one too. The boys sings about murdering a black metal band on "Forbidden Crypts," pay tribute to the addition of a fourth member (guitarist) on "Sewer Chewer", and even include a cover of "What a Wonderful World" with new lyrics that are twisted as hell. The one oddball track is a surfer-sounding instrumental called "The End?" yet it's cool and somehow fits. The band describes its unique brand of modern day horror thrash as "anti-wimp mosh core" and it's damn hard to argue with the description. Go buy this now! – Scott Alisoglu Razorback Records: PO Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738 USA www.razorbackrecords.com

MACABRE – *Murder Metal* – Season of Mist America

The purveyors of true crime have returned with a bludgeoning slab of *Murder Metal* (no pun intended). The follow up to the critically acclaimed *Dahmer* album picks up right where its predecessor left off musically, but focuses this time on serial sickoes and the monsters that have haunted our nightmares for centuries. The songs here are exactly what you'd expect; at once hysterical, completely pummeling, deliberately tongue-in-cheek, brutally relentless, ever-eclectic, unmistakably catchy and distinctly MACABRE. Let's face it, no one but Corporate Death, Nefarious, and Dennis the Menace could pull off music of this nature. The fact that they do so with such crushing authority and skill is a testament to who they are, true innovators and on a plane of their own. That said, *Murder Metal* is a (serial) killer album (pun intended) – a must for any fan of the band, and a great first listen for the uninitiated. If you don't own it, you'd best fix that problem. – Adam Sagan MACABRE: www.murdermetal.com Season of Mist America: 931 North 2nd St, Philadelphia, PA 19123 USA www.season-of-mist.com

MISERY INDEX – *Retaliate* – Nuclear Blast USA

Comprised of former DYING FETUS members, MISERY INDEX carry the DYING FETUS backbone into new territory with a vicious death metal assault that levels the playing field and carves a distinct style that rivals many of the heavyweights in the international scene today. Huge grooves, schizophrenic compositions, memorable riffs and superhuman drum work intertwine effortlessly into a monstrous cacophony that maintains the force of a shotgun blast to the face. Unlike many death metal bands that simply exist to outdo each other, MISERY INDEX actually produce dead-on songwriting skills with a solid hardcore base. The blasts are well timed and perfectly executed, with each highly technical composition fully explored. *Retaliate* is a triumphant mix of many styles, one that is sure to go down as one of the best death albums of 2003. For fans of DYING FETUS, SKINLESS, WITHERED EARTH and the like. – Ryan Bartek Nuclear Blast USA: 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250 USA www.nuclearblast.de



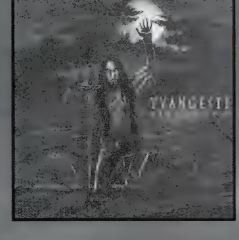
NEUROSIS & JAROBE – *Neurosis & Jarobe* – Neurot Recordings

On this album, the Bay Area band, NEUROSIS, collaborate with the powerful vocalist, JAROBE—best known from the band, SWANS—to create a powerful and ethereal experience. NEUROSIS has been around for about 17 years now, and have released eight albums. They have experimented with many musical genres, leaving them without a real 'catch-all' label. They've been tagged industrial, metal, goth, hardcore—you name it!

When SWANS disbanded in 99, JAROBE has released three solo albums and has collaborated with several writers. This latest collaboration may sound surprising, but really, perhaps it was only a matter of time before NEUROSIS and JAROBE found each other—the band and the vocalist both love to push the edges of music and sound, and on this album, that's exactly what they do. With the heavy, sometimes raw, music as a back-drop for JAROBE's intense and sometimes spooky vocals, the album renders itself a winding tale; one song melts into the next, producing an epic sound in the end. If you like experimental, yet truly great musicianship, I would recommend you check out this collaboration! – Errin Klein NEUROSIS: www.neurosis.com Neurot Recordings: PO Box 410209, San Francisco, CA 94141 USA www.neurotrecordings.com

SERPENS AEON – *Dawn of Kouatl* – Moribund Records

From the heart of Washington comes a disturbing nosedive into hell. SERPENS AEON combine elements of MORBID ANGEL with black metal madness to create an intense listening experience. The pace of the album is typically very fast but marked by stark periods of slithering groove. Although the blastbeating wears on the ears after a couple of minutes, there is enough variation in the drumming to allow for effectiveness on the blasting parts. The sound is surprisingly dense for a three piece. The guitar work on the album is reminiscent of IMMOLATION in its harshness but takes flight in some very creative soloing. Cover art is a haunting painting by Gabriel Byrne. This album would make an excellent addition to any death metal collection. – Freddy Rollins SERPENS AEON: www.serpensaeon.com Moribund Records: 530-A 19th Street, Port Townsend, WA USA 98368 www.moribundcult.com



TVANGESTE – *Firestorm* – World Chaos Production

Firestorm is a true accomplishment in the orchestral black metal vein. The stirring intro track leads the listener into the wonderful symphonic pieces at the heart of this album with grace and fury intertwined. This Russian seven-piece unit is well supported by the Prussian Chamber Choir and Baltic Symphonic Orchestra. With the recent conversion of CRADLE OF FILTH and DIMMU BORGIR fully into the realm of symphonic black metal, this album would seemingly be crushed by the more marketable competition, but TVANGESTE can certainly bang with the big boys. Thickly textured compositions and eerie vocals accentuate the lush keyboard and symphonic elements. The unearthly female vocals, supplied ably by Olaa, really steal the show. Her voice is phenomenal. On the other end of the spectrum are the chilling black metal screeches of Michael Chirva, an excellent complement. Riding underneath the maelstrom is an intelligent storyline with well written lyrics. The album is accompanied by a stunning insert with full color illustrations and pictures. This is a mandatory purchase for all fans of symphonic black metal and highly recommended for metal fans looking to expand their musical horizons. – Kurt Krueger TVANGESTE: www.tvangeste.com World Chaos Production: #406 New Light Bld., 2-25-6 Hongo Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo Japan 113-0033 www.world-chaos.com

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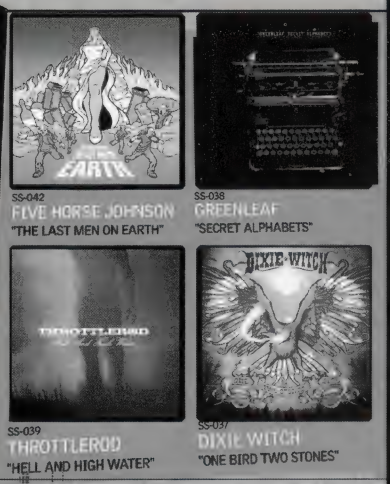


APATHY

B. R. O. K. E. N. – Independent Release

When I ask Colorado-based bands what local groups stand out, APATHY is mentioned more often than not. Little wonder after hearing this excellent Hellion Studios-produced full length CD. Don't let the beanie on vocalist Brian Ortiz's head fool you, this is outstanding modern heavy metal music with strong death metal influences. APATHY is different from other bands by virtue of their intriguing musicality. They break up the grind with thrashiness, feature trippy background vocals, and offer creative solos. Don't miss the hauntingly beautiful (and unexpected) final track. A band with this much talent, good material, and taste, deserves much more press. If you haven't heard of them before, remember that you read about them here first. Get this! – Jon "K" Konjoyan APATHY: 7152 S Tamarac St, Englewood, CO 80112 USA www.apathysux.homestead.com

CHRISTIANSEN

Stylish Nihilists – Revelation Rec

Louisville, Kentucky's CHRISTIANSEN's third album, *Stylish Nihilists*, build on their hardcore roots and deliver a solid album, with added musical maturity. The guitars are fast, but the bass and drums keep up an almost danceable beat. The vocals are sincere and to the point. The album also boasts a guest appearance by Daryl Palumbo of GLASSJAW on two songs. The song, "The Middle Finger," is my personal favorite, but you'll also enjoy, "Dead Celebrities are Amusing" and "In Smut We Yearn." Based on the progression of their albums, I think this band should be around for awhile. CHRISTIANSEN are currently on tour, supporting their latest effort, so if you hear their name hit your town, go see 'em! – Errin Klein CHRISTIANSEN: www.christiansenonline.com Revelation Rec: PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232 USA www.revelationrecords.com

COCK AND BALL TORTURE

Sadochismo – The Spew Records

Fifteen tracks of the most disgusting shit I have heard in a while. Great fun! COCK AND BALL TORTURE utilize one of the most unique vocal styles on the market today. It sounds like the singer is singing through a bong. I don't know how they managed this effect, but it is repulsive and a total fucking blast to listen to. Unfortunately it makes the lyrics completely unintelligible and, without help from the insert, almost totally irrelevant. Guitars grind throughout with a heavy crunch. COCK AND BALL TORTURE can definitely find really dirty grooves to slip into. The drums are played with an almost total lack of blastbeating, which has little effect on the total sound. The insert has some very bizarre and well done images but does lack lyrics. Disturbing yet intriguing entry to any CD catalogue. – Kurt Krueger COCK AND BALL TORTURE: www.cockandball.de The Spew Rec: Via Fontanelle 8, 25012 Calvisano (BS) Italy www.thespew.org

DEBODIFIED

Utopia in the Eyes of a Beast – Comatose Music

There's no mistaking the intent of DEBODIFIED – make the most insane war metal possible. This shit is fast as hell, heavy as a tank, and a neck-snapping good time. The guitars churn with a frenetic pace. Drums are absolutely fast and controlled. The vocals combine opposite ends of the metal spectrum – blood-gurgling gutturals and blood-curdling screams. They are mainly utilized in unison, adding a distinct taste to the vocals. Highly recommended for fans of war and death metal. – Freddy Rollins DEBODIFIED: www.debodified.com Comatose Music: c/o Steve Green, PO Box 1518, Kings Mountain, NC 28086 USA www.comatosemusic.com

DETRIMENT

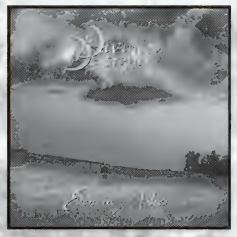
Detriment – Independent Release

DETRIMENT is one of Los Angeles' first death metal bands, having played local clubs, off and on, for many years. Now, drummer and vocalist Mike Lane (that's right, he drums AND sings) has reunited with his bandmates. For those just now discovering the group, this new CD is an excellent introduction to their music. Like their buddies in VEHEMENCE and RETCH, DETRIMENT is uncompromising in its brutal, straight ahead musical approach. Lane was an early fan of NAPALM DEATH and SUFFOCATION, and the crushing, thrash/death style heard here is clearly influenced by those kinds of musicians. At the same time, DETRIMENT (Lane, guitarist J.D., guitarist/vocalist Ryan Gomez, and bassist Scott) mix it up well, playing some ultra-heavy jams next to slower parts that have an almost classic rock vibe. But overall, DETRIMENT is hard and heavy. After listening to this CD, it wouldn't be surprising or undeserved that they finally get their due. – Jon "K" Konjoyan DETRIMENT: 876 W. Upland Ave, San Pedro, CA 90731 USA dst212@aol.com

GENERAL SURGERY
THE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINERS

Split CD – Razorback Records

Medical mayhem and surgical atrocity is the order of the day on this split CD. It's a no-brainer that the musical style and detailed lyrical content harkens back to AUTOPSY and early CARCASS. Sweden's GENERAL SURGERY gives us seven tracks of brutal death grind with hardly a hint of melody, although there are some cool breakdowns and tough grooves. The approach is largely about sonic bludgeoning with song titles like "Pre-Bisectal Corrosive Immersion" and the ridiculously long-titled "Convivial Corpse Disposal Methodology/Severe Catatonic Intersection of Pathological Activities." THE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINERS continue the style with six tracks that aren't quite as tight or powerful as GENERAL SURGERY, but no less ripping. The drums sound a little loose at times. Still, the delivery is relentless and the trio of doctors serves up some cool riffing on their mortuary grind. RAZORBACK knows grind and this split CD shows it. – Scott Alisoglu Razorback Records: PO Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738 USA www.razorbackrecords.com



DIVINITY DESTROYED

Eden In Ashes – Independent Release

Hooray for DIVINITY DESTROYED for taking chances. This astonishing CD grabs the listener's attention by successfully blending such disparate sounding elements as black metal, Celtic flourishes, progressive metal, even Asian and Native American influences into a satisfying, fluid musical adventure. All of these ear (and mind) opening sonic nuances mix well, an obvious result of a lot of thought devoted to each of these carefully crafted tracks. Lead singer Mark Ward is versatile, but favors clean vocals. The band plays flawlessly, and the recording is superb. While a lot of the material has a kick-back quality to it, the catchy closing track, "Divinity," kicks a lot of ass, and is a stand out. This is a serious CD, interesting because the band is somewhat known for its sarcastic sense of humor and bloody stage antics. – Jon "K" Konjoyan DIVINITY DESTROYED: PO Box 1686, Toms River, NJ 08753 USA www.divinitydestroyed.com

ELYSIUM

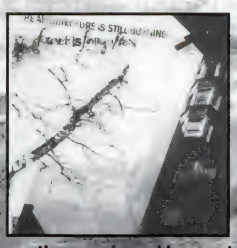
Feedback – Metal Mind Productions

This is the third full-length from one of Poland's finest. ELYSIUM definitely deserve stylistic comparisons to some of Gothenburg's finest, but this band certainly has many things going for them outside of melodic death. Thought-provoking lyrics, broken rhythms, a twin guitar attack that absolutely shreds, and terrific overall presentation. The band has been around since '96 in various forms and illustrates their maturity with this release. Accompanied by beautiful cover art and lyrics. Impressive album and heavily recommended for fans of the melodic death and thrash scenes. – Freddy Rollins ELYSIUM: www.elysium.metal.pl Metal Mind Productions: www.metalopolis.pl

EXHUMED

Anatomy Is Destiny – Relapse Records

EXHUMED have once again returned with *Anatomy Is Destiny*, an album that further drags the band into the very pinnacle of gore/death metal. The usual mayhem abounds, but this time around EXHUMED have upped the technical scale, fine-tuned their approach, secured better production value and have collected a mosaic of badass riffs and driving material. The new songs are meaty and hectic, with plenty of dive bombs and musical butchery. There is a big CARCASS influence on *Anatomy Is Destiny*, and also a mix of many other styles as well. This time around we get some thrash and grind thrown in, and the album is all the more lethal for it. EXHUMED fans will definitely be pleased, as well as hardcore death mettalers in general. – Ryan Bartek EXHUMED: www.exhumed.us Relapse Rec: PO Box 2060, Upper Darby, PA 19082 USA www.relapse.com



FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN

The Architecture is Still Burning – Thorp Records

Thorp is on a roll. They have signed some of the most progressive and exciting bands around. FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN is no exception, these guys are way out of control. This album is hard hitting urbancore metal. The guitars vacillate between excruciating speeds and mellow brilliance. Drums control the wide array of paces with technical superiority. The bass lines are as frantic as the guitars, yet manage to contain the pace with deep intensity. The lyrics and vocals are the crowning achievement of the album. This is an impressive release musically and visually, and then throw in the fact that this is an enhanced album, FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN's got my money. The enhanced features have a cool live video, links to the website, full lyrics, and some wallpaper to toss on to the desktop. Superb output. This is an impressive product and strongly recommended for fans of progressive, urban metal. – Kurt Krueger FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN: www.forever is forgotten.com Thorp Records: PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612 USA www.thorprecords.com

FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES

The Fiction We Live – Vagrant Records

In the great tradition of NY hardcore, this album is a collaboration of influence and style. This album takes a bit from metal, a piece from punk, a dash of emo, and throws it all into the mixing pot that is hardcore. Interesting output from the Long Islanders on this sophomore effort. FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES provides a concept album based on a character from a yet to be written novel. Great blend of urban elements, melodic moodiness (even some female vocals), and metallic fury. Will definitely appeal to fans of modern hardcore. – Freddy Rollins FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES: www.fromautumntoashes.com Vagrant Rec: 2118 Wilshire Blvd #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403 USA www.vagrant.com

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HELLWITCH

Final Approach **– Progressive Arts Music**

The mighty HELLWITCH has been around for almost twenty years and certainly display the maturity that comes with a lengthy career. The album offers up nineteen tracks, ten new or rerecorded and nine demo tracks. This is metal in the great Florida tradition. Tremendous clean solo work and heavily distorted, tight riffing. Vocals are similar to OBITUARY with a higher intonation. Drumming is powerful and blazing. There is a definite distinction in quality between the new and old songs but fans of HELLWITCH will appreciate the older material. Insert includes a lengthy band biography and extensive photo montage. Excellent overview of a standout career. – Freddy Rollins Progressive Arts Music: 106 N. Cortez, Circle C, Pompano Beach, FL 33068 USA www.progressiveartsmusic.com

MANEGARM

Dodsfard **– Displeased Records**

Traditional Viking metal with heavy folk influences. This album boasts one of the most interesting conglomerations of the Viking mythos and Norwegian folk metal. Throaty growls supplemented with the occasional clean interludes. Creative and inventive guitar work. The music is highly atmospheric in a way that doesn't send the listener spiraling into depression. This is music celebrating the open sea and war without sounding trite or overwrought. Unfortunately for American fans, the album is performed mostly in MANEGARM's native Norwegian tongue but who really cares? This is good, beer-swilling fun. Fans of EINHERJER and FINNTROLL are highly encouraged to pillage this album for their own treasure chest. – Kurt Krueger MANEGARM: www.manegarm.com Displeased Records: Ronde Tocht 7D, NL-1507 CC Zaandam, Holland www.displeasedrecords.com

MINDFIELD

Be-Low **– Lifeforce Records**

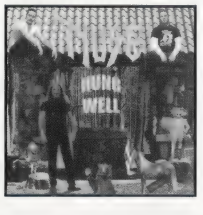
Talk about your flashbacks! This album is like a throwback to the glory days of power and progressive metal. Combines the raw gun-slinging power of SAVATAGE and the forward thinking guitar work of QUEENSRYCHE. Amazingly rich guitar riffs and solos coupled with intense, clean vocals; this is a tremendous release. Although MINDFIELD rely on power metal traditions (including some very cool piano work), they avoid the nostalgia pitfall by refreshing a sadly abandoned genre. Recommended for fans of FATES WARNING, DREAM THEATER, and all things progressively powerful. – Freddy Rollins MINDFIELD: mindfield-webhq.de Lifeforce Records: Box 938, 09009 Chemnitz, Germany www.lifeforcerecords.com

NEURAXIS

Truth Beyond... **– Galy Records**

Canadian powerhouse NEURAXIS return with a superb effort. *Truth Beyond...* is an album filled to bursting with speed and technical precision. Unbelievable pace to this album that rarely relents. The speed of the attack does little to diminish the artistry in the guitar work. One of the few moments of breath-gasping rest is the beautiful guitar interlude at track seven. Demonstrates the creative side of a genre that usually gets passed over in favor of brutality. Of course as soon as the track ends, we are back up to full speed aural assault. NEURAXIS is definitely on par with countrymen CRYPTOPSY and KATAKLYSM. Members of CEPHALIC CARNAGE stop by for some guest vocals, adding to an already powerful release. Mandatory for death metal fans. – Kurt Krueger NEURAXIS: www.neuraxis.org Galy Rec: 5100 De Verdun, PO Box 28544, Verdun Quebec, Canada H4G 3L7 www.galyrecords.com

NUSE – *Hung Well* – Cornhead Records



Well, sometimes you have to have a good laugh. Not that this is a laughable release but this is a pretty fun, hard rocking album. Definitely paying tribute to the NY hardcore traditions by mixing in a DJ here and there, vocals that are almost spoken at times, and some funky bass work. Overall, this is an album to play for good times but not one that will be taken seriously by many metal fans. – Freddy Rollins NUSE: www.nuse.tv

NOCTURNAL FEAR

Sterilize And Exterminate **– Unholy Records**

NOCTURNAL FEAR are a band that you wish the guys in THE HAUNTED and DEW SCENTED knew about – if they were to possess even the slightest amount of passion N.F. does, then the new wave of thrash would be lit on fire for many years to come. NOCTURNAL FEAR shred a vicious concoction that calls to mind a mix between early SODOM, KREATOR and *Leprosy*-era DEATH that is so lethal you can't help but drop whatever the fuck it is your doing and start headbanging immediately. The riffs and basslines drop with Nagasaki-like precision, and when the entire composition comes into full effect it's like a Russian haymaker straight to the nervous system. Each song is massively driving and intense, given all of the extra kick necessary when Remorseless Wargrinders' blackened vocals kick in. This is tear-your-throat-out-kick-your-head-in-shoot-your-neighbor-with-a-rusty-harpoon-gun mania all the way. Highly recommended. – Ryan Bartek

RETCH

Ben-Wa Baby Heads **– Unmatched Brutality**

RETCH, like SEPSISM and EPICEDIUM, is another notorious SoCal extreme metal band to earn a recent label signing. Owing to major regional influences like San Diego's DISGORGE and the hallowed DEEDS OF FLESH, *Ben-Wa Baby Heads* will not disappoint fans of balls-out, hellishly brutal metal with sickeningly guttural vocals. Guitarist Justin Richey's relentlessly fast drum programming sets the stage for he and bassist (and co-vocalist) Ryan Allen's demented sonic attacks. The recording is top notch. Several Pit readers have indicated that they discovered this band at one of the many fests that they've played or via the internet. The repugnantly obscene song titles and unsettling cover art are a bit over the top, but I suppose someone will find them amusing in a deranged sort of way. – Jon "K" Konjoyan RETCH: 4918 Marion Ave, Torrance, CA 90505 USA www.violentvomit.com Unmatched Brutality Rec: PO Box 12023, Knoxville, TN 37912 USA www.unmatchedbrutality.com

VERMINOUS

Impious Sacrilege **– Xtreem Music**

Impious Sacrilege plays like the soundtrack to a horror film. I can't even begin to describe how fast this platter spins. Unbelievable! These Swedes have done their homework and can certainly hang with their American death metal counterparts, not to mention countrymen NASUM. The vocals are slightly grainier than the usual gutter sludge of most death metal singers. The manic guitar playing is filled with distortion and tight riffs and occasionally drifts into clean solos. Drummers beware, this guys arms are about to fall off. Well executed, technically proficient drumming dominates the pace of this train wreck personified. If you are looking for fast, uncompromising death metal, you've found it. – Freddy Rollins VERMINOUS: Andreas Johansson, Åvägen 14, 296 38 Åhus, Sweden www.verminous.com Xtreem Music: PO Box 1195, 28080 Madrid, Spain www.xtreemmusic.com

WHILE HEAVEN WEPT

Of Empires Forlorn **– Rage of Achilles Records**

This is one of the more interesting albums I have picked up in a long time. The album is a throwback to the glorious days of soaring power metal anthems, minus the cheese factor. The vocals ride on gossamer wings and bring the listener to unbelievable heights. Amazing guitar work represented in the strength of the riffing and the powerful solos. This is a band that has survived many changes since its inception back in 1991 and shows the marks of the seasoned veterans filling its roster. Each song is a stirring mixture of pace and vocal variation. Recommended for fans of melodic power metal. – Freddy Rollins WHILE HEAVEN WEPT: 4809 Lockwood Ln, Dale City, VA 22193 USA www.whileheavenwept.net Rage of Achilles Records: PO Box 20508, London NW8 8WT, England www.rageofachilles.com

THROTTLEROD

BY MICHA KITE

SIX SHOOTERS, SIX PACKS, OR SIX CYLINDERS ARE ALL APPLICABLE TO THIS VIRGINIA CREW OF SHIT KICKERS. BORN AND BRED ON FINE BACKWOODS CORN LIQUOR AND BARN BURNING BARBECUE, THEIR FIRST RELEASE EASTBOUND AND DOWN WAS A TOE-TO-TOE THROW DOWN AT THE HOEDOWN. SINCE THEN, HEARTS HAVE BEEN BROKEN AND BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BURNT AND THIS TIME THE FELLAS AREN'T TAKING ANY PRISONERS AS HELL OR HIGH WATER IS A DIRECT SALT ROCK BLAST TO THE ASS AS YOU'RE RUNNING FOR THE DOOR.

Pit: The songwriting on* Hell Or High Water *is extremely solid and that's evident from the press you've been getting.

Bo Leslie: Matt [vocals and guitar] had a lot more to do with this one. He wrote primarily ninety percent of it. With the last album, we were a young band getting our feet wet and that record was everything we had written up to that point. There's a couple of songs now that I wish wouldn't have made it but then again every band does that. This new record is really focused and we know what we want as a band and Matt knows what he wants as a singer and songwriter. I'm not talking trash but Matt was unemployed a lot last year and he would walk into practice with completed songs. He would call me at work and go "check this shit out" and I would run to a corner to listen to stuff which would always make my day because I knew I had fun shit to do at band practice that night. Then you have stuff like "Whistlin' Dixie," and that riff is probably the oldest riff in the band, and then there's other little pieces like "Honest Joe" that I contributed on.

There was a quote tossed around basically stating the need to support this album or there won't be another* THROTTLEROD *record?

That credo is probably true for a lot of independent bands. We've done everything do-or-die and gone about it as hard as we can because you never know what's going to happen. I think what the quote meant was we wanted to make the album as if it was our last and we would be completely and totally happy with it, and we've achieved that. I've had goals since I was twelve years old and started playing guitar. I wanted to make a record and I did that, I wanted to play out of town and I did that and I wanted to go on tour and I did that. Now I wanna make a huge sounding record and go to Europe and at the same time I've always done what I wanted to do and I would be completely happy if the entire thing exploded.

What do you say to the nay Sayers who claim this album is too slick?

I'm going to take a side and bands have to do this. I did not want the typical independent guitar sound or the fuzzed out stoner rock guitar sound, which drives me crazy. I can't tell the difference between a LOWRIDER record and a stonerrock.com number seven band. We had some people make comments and how is it even possible that this album sounds commercial?

I sure as hell don't get it...

This was our attempt to make a METALLICA record and we wanted to make the biggest, huge, most retarded sounding record we could and I think we got close to that considering the time frame we had.

Are you pretty disciplined in the studio or is there some boozery going down?

The studio goes both ways. Let me tell you about the studio we recorded in. New Alliance is in this warehouse that about sixty bands rehearse in and its downstairs and there is amazing energy in there. We would be hanging out doing tracks and Jonah from Traktor 7 Records would come down, LAMONT came down, QUINTAINE AMERICANA came down and it was just a cool vibe and we would have some drinks and shoot pool or run out to a bar and see a band play. Here's a great story that Andrew Schneider (producer) would hate to be printed. I'm doing guitar tracks and I look at my watch and its like three o'clock in the morning. I look over to ask Andrew if that part was cool and that dude was asleep with a clipboard on his chest and a beer in his hand (laughter). There's nothing too insane, except the hidden track you can tell was recorded early in the morning and our minds were Jell-O by that point.

DESTRUCTION

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

IT IS ALWAYS VERY EXCITING WHEN **DESTRUCTION** RELEASES A NEW ALBUM. METAL DISCHARGE IS THE THIRD ALBUM SINCE THE BAND REUNITED IN THE LATE 90'S. IT'S THE FIRST ALBUM WITH DRUMMER, MARC REIGN, BEHIND THE CONTROLS. **DESTRUCTION** APPEARS TO BE AS GOOD AS THEY EVER WERE.

Pit: Regardless of how intense the new album is, it still comes across a little bit relaxed. Did you take that approach on purpose?

Schmier: We knew we were gonna do a great album, but we wanted to change a little and not just stick to one formula. Our last album, *Antichrist*, was very fast and furious. When we started working on this record, we decided to keep the speed, but we wanted to bring more slow heavy parts and more musical aspects to the music.

Speaking of* Antichrist, *did you expect it to become such a landmark album as it did?

I'm always surprised because you try to put everything you got into it. You just never know what the reviews will be. We already had great reviews on *All Hell Breaks Loose*, so everyone was skeptical as to what comes after. So, you have come back to reality and really give your best. We were very happy with the response. Now, with the new album, the expectations are even higher. We spent a lot of time touring for *Antichrist*, so the band really had a time to get even better. We knew what we wanted to make better for this album, and we hope we achieved that.

***You added Marc Reign (drums) right before the last tour. How did he find himself being in* DESTRUCTION?**

He's not so new anymore. I think it was great that he had a chance to come into the band and do a big tour before doing the album. This way he could get a feeling for all the old songs and how we operate. He's been with us for two years. He was very excited to do the album. Marc is a very good technical player. He likes to hit the bass drums fast. Everything worked out pretty well.

This time you've used a new studio, and a new producer.

A good friend of ours has a studio in Switzerland (**DESTRUCTION** is based right around German/Switzerland border) and we were mixing the live record there for Japan. We really liked the atmosphere of the studio and we recorded some demos there. We figured why don't we go here and produce the album? It's a very nice area in the Swiss Alps. On top of it, we were only one hour away from home. It was a change for us as well. Sweden and Peter Tatgren was great, but this time we wanted to go little bit more old school feel. The guy who produced the album is Vial, and he also plays in a band named GURD. He's a very cool person and we got along great.

One thing that definitely stands out is that Mike's guitar is not so "in your face." That's little bit surprising because he's a premier player who does not need to be covered in the mix.

We felt that on the last two previous albums the guitars had too much high crunch. This time we tried to balance the whole sound. At the end, we weren't sure if the guitar was loud enough or not. But we were looking for a live mix that features the whole band. **DESTRUCTION** is a three-piece so you need to hear all the parts. Speaking for myself, my bass was never as loud as it is on this album. I like it. Maybe the guitar could've been a little bit louder but I really like how the vocals are mixed this time. The vocals are definitely louder. You see, often the vocals and the guitar tend to eat each other, so you have to compromise somewhere in the middle. You're definitely correct. The guitar is not as super-loud as previously.

What is the story behind the live album for the Japanese market only?

Well, you know how the Japanese market works. They always want something special. When we finally got there, *Antichrist*, was already two years old. They wanted something fresh, so at that point we decided to give them a live recording from Wacken 2002. It was sort of compromise on our part because then we started to hear demands from the rest of the fans. Good news is that we will include it along with the DVD we're working on. So wait and save you money for the import.

Speaking of DVD, what will it include?

We'll try to include everything we've got. Whatever we filmed, we'll use. It's hard to get material from the 80's, but we'll try to include everything we have as long as it looks good. There's a lot of stuff we have. We're gonna put a special effort into this DVD because it will represent the 20 years of **DESTRUCTION**. It will be nice and entertaining.

Your last U.S. tour seemed much more properly organized this time.

Yes, it was great. Us and KREATOR had a lot of fun. We hit all the major cities and there wer no problems. The only problem was when my bass got stolen somewhere in California, and I broke my knuckle at the end of the tour, but that's a different story. We were very happy with the reaction from the fans. It proved to everyone that there's definitely potential in the underground scene.

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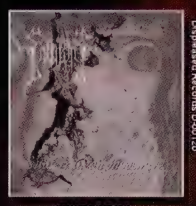

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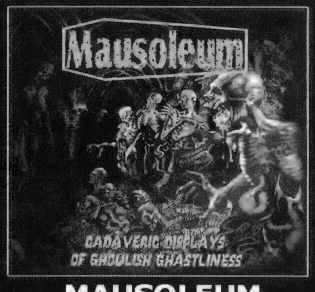

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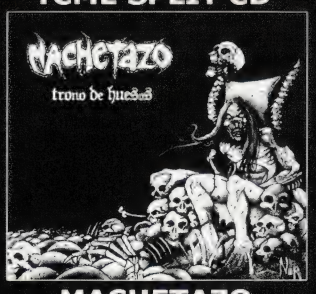

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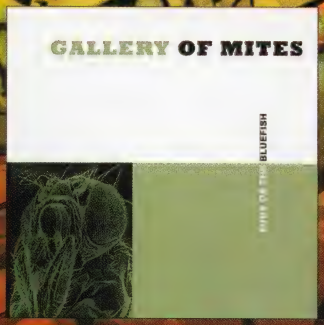

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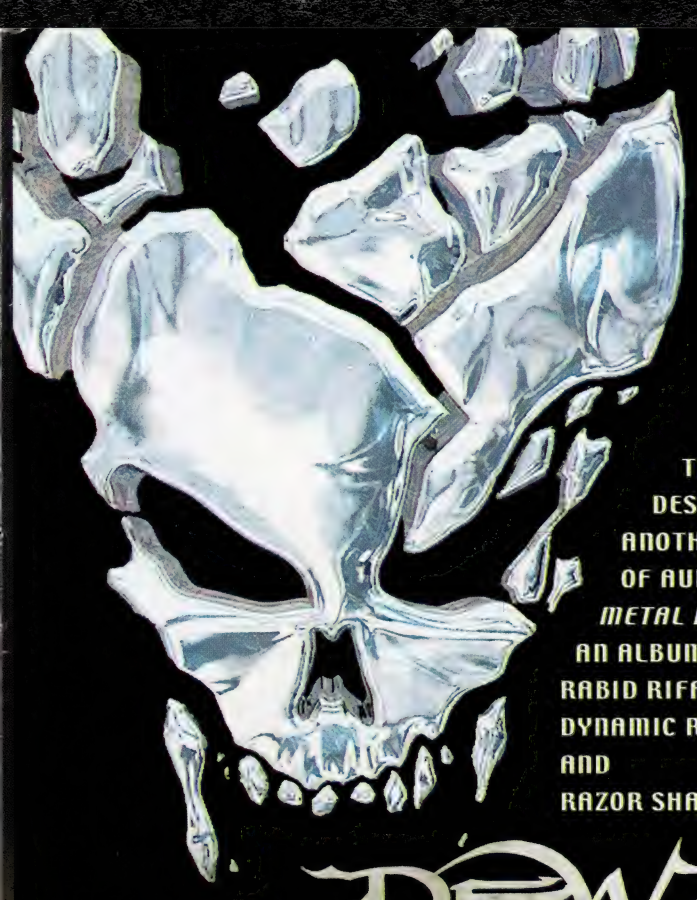

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TATTOO MACHINE

Featuring Dan Marshall

By Kelli Malella

THIS is the last installment on my interviews with the infamous artists over at Last Rites Tattoo in NY. This time around I had the chance to talk to Dan Marshall, who has done some pretty amazing work, but what stood out to me was his work with color pieces. Especially a killer Garbage Pail Kids sleeve. Dan has been drawing pretty much all his life and received his first tattoo while attending art school. "From that moment on I was hooked and knew that I wanted to get involved in the tattoo world." Taking inspiration from different artists like Marcus Pacheko, Paul Booth, Guy Aitchison and anyone else who was doing something out of the norm Dan started to develop a talent that has managed to land him one of the best tattoo gigs in the world: working for Paul Booth at Last Rites.

Pit: When did you start and how did you learn?

Dan Marshall: I started tattooing in Connecticut at Turnpike Tattoo around eight years ago. My friend Gunner helped in getting me in as an apprentice. A few months later, I went to go work with Tom Strom at Papillon, also in Connecticut. I then went to go work with Shahn Anderson at Electric Dragonland in Minneapolis where Tom had gone to work as well. Having enough of the arctic wasteland, I moved to L.A. to West Hollywood Tattoo and worked with Todd K. I feel as though I've come full circle, coming back to the east coast to work at Last Rites.

How long have you been working with Paul Booth and what has the experience been like?

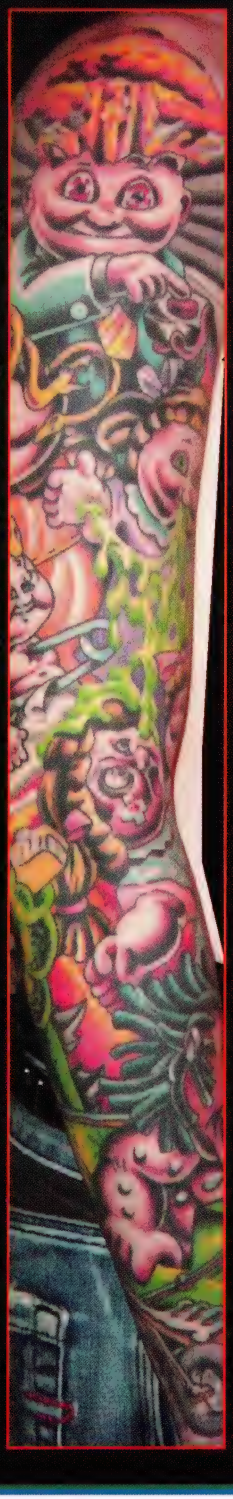
I've been with Paul for about a year now and it's been the best experience of my career.

Do you ever feel pressure working for someone like Paul Booth who is known to be one of the best tattoo artists of our time? Or do you look at it like an amazing opportunity to expand your own knowledge and skill?

I never want to stagnate so I'm constantly changing and adding to my arsenal of images and techniques. There is a consistency in the way that I draw, paint and tattoo, but I don't want to limit myself to one particular style.

When I was looking at your portfolio on the site I noticed you have a lot of really good color tattoos. Do you like to work more with color? Was learning how to do color tattoos more difficult than B&W? By the way I love the Garbage Pail Kids sleeve you did.

I really enjoy color work but working at Last Rites has definitely allowed me to explore my black and gray techniques. Color isn't necessarily harder, there's just more to consider in the ways the colors relate to each other. You can't throw every color you have into every tattoo and not expect it to look like a rainbow just threw up on you. The Garbage Pail Kid sleeve was a lot of fun and the guy that wears it is an awesome kid named Russelltroubleonthedouble. That tattoo is about as close as I like to come to rainbow vomit but it was fitting for the piece.



How did you get to where you are today in the sense of creativity, design, and workmanship?

I've been very fortunate to have worked with really talented people throughout my career. It's great to be able to bounce ideas around and draw on each other creatively. Working closely with other creative people makes me push myself and grow into new directions.

What do you feel people should know when it comes to getting a new tattoo? Will you tell someone if you think the piece they want to get is not such a good idea? Or is it more of they want it they can have it?

For the most part, I feel that it's not my job to judge what you want. Everybody has there own reasons for getting what they get. I won't do any gang related, racist or pro-Christian images. Any other advice I give is of a design nature to make the most out of the piece.

Where do you get the inspiration for your art?

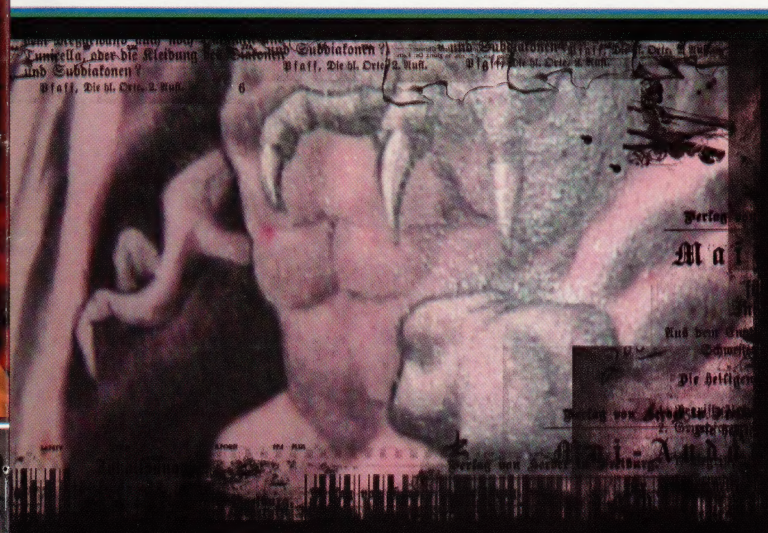
I get inspiration from a number of different places: movies, magazines, music, comic books, and anime. I often consider my ideas while meditating for hours on my special throne of darkness.

When people come in to get work done do they give you the actual art that they want and say "don't change it" or "make this better" or do they just tell ya to go to town?

Usually people will come in with a basic idea and I'll flesh it out and expand on it. You'll get a much stronger tattoo if you let the artist have a little freedom with the image and know when to trust and relinquish control.

How much time do you need when you work on someone from start to finish? Like when they decide what they want do you tell them to wait a few weeks while you work on it or do you start immediately?

I usually take a couple of days at most to start to get the image together. I like to start working on a piece while my original thoughts about it are still fresh. I won't start the tattoo until we're both 100% satisfied with the image. So the actual time from concept to completion varies greatly from piece to piece.



Do you feel like the tattoo industry is changing for the better or the worse...or not at all?

There are always good and bad points to consider about the changing of the industry. I'm glad that most people are finding tattoos to be more acceptable. Any bad points I'll just keep to myself.

What are your plans as far as work goes? Do you want to open your own shop at one point, travel around the world, or get into other avenues of art?

I feel that I'm exactly where I need to be right now. I plan to stay at Last Rites for a good long time. I'm working on producing a lot of fine art right now so we'll see where that leads in the future.

What are some of your other hobbies outside of tattoos? Do you have a life outside of the shop?

My life outside of the shop basically consists of painting, drinking and behaving as much like an idiot as possible (not necessarily in that order). Not to mention the occasional slaughtering of lambs and dances with the goat.

What bands are you into at the moment? Have you done work on any bands yet and if you have who?

My musical tastes are all over the board depending on my mood. I'm currently listening to a lot of stoner rock like SUPER JOINT RITUAL, SLEEP, CLUTCH, KYUSS and my assorted guilty pleasure bands that I'm too embarrassed to mention. I've done work on Ryan and Jon from 3D ARSON, Michael from THIS ENGINE BURNS, both excellent L.A. bands, and Kelly from the fantastic NYC band SICKS DEEP.

If you could tattoo anyone in the world who would it be (alive or dead)?

Not to be a downer or anything but it would have to be my dad who passed away before I had the chance to tattoo him.

What do you suggest for aspiring tattoo artists? How should they get started and whom should they look to for help?

Make sure you know how to draw before you get into doing tattoos. You need to know how to walk before you can run. If you get the opportunity to serve as an apprentice, stay committed to it and give 110% at all times. The rest is a lot of hard work and sometimes dumb luck.

Okay that's it. Any last words?

To quote my good friend Richard Day "I break 'em, I ride 'em, I train 'em!"

END

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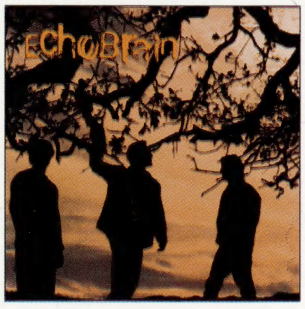

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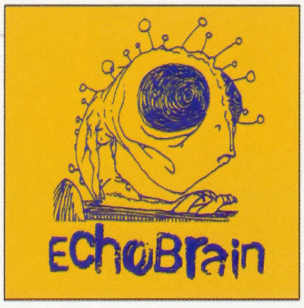

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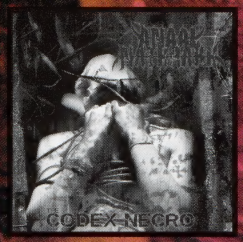

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CD $11

Experimental post-rock vs. industrial dark ambient. Sounds range from gothic to avantgarde ambient to atmospheric industrial and beyond.

ASTERIUS
A Moment Of Singularity

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Amazing debut! Extremely original metal with two singers mixed with traditional elements. Mastered by Alex Krull (Atrocity) and includes a video-clip!

DARKENED SKIES
Dawn Of Dreams

CD $11

Heavily influenced by the Gothenburg scene, this highly versitle Puerto Rican group will please even the most demanding metal fan.

HAMMERS OF MISFORTUNE
The August Engine

CD $12

Second album for this astonishig SF project. Features J. Cobbett (Amber Asylum/Slough Feg) on guitars and M. Scalzi (Slough Feg) on vocals. The best Epic Metal is here!

HELLMASTERS
I Would Kill For Rock N Roll

CD $11

If you like early Metallica, Slayer or Pantera, you can't go wrong with this album. Germany's *Hammer* magazine (Sept. '03) entitled them "heroes of tomorrow".

JEZABEL
Legiones Del Sur

CD $12

Over 55 minutes of Euro power metal (Helloween/Stratovarius/Gamma Ray) style from Argentina! Includes video-clip.

LORD BLASPHEMER
Tales Of Misanthropy, Bloodlust & Mass Homicide

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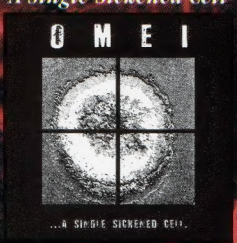
Continuing the fine tradition of their brutal brethren like Master, Abomination, Burnt Offering and Cianide comes this killer trio from Chicago!

NUN SLAUGHTER
Goat

CD $11

15 tracks of blasphemy and disgrace from the masters of raw Satanic death metal! Should appeal to fans of 80's thrash as well as fans of the 90's death metal explosion.

OMEI
A Single Sickened Cell



CD $11

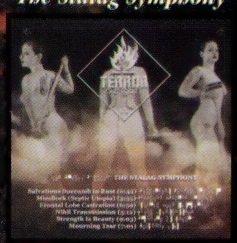
Experimental dark soundscapes & noise backdrops from Chris of Sickness. The mixture of haunting and oppressive tones is something for fans of everyone from Raision D'Etre to Schloss Tegal.

STRUCTURE OF LIES
Abacus

CD $10

A car-crush construction of death metal ferocity and crusty hardcore obliteration, this Arizona unit blasts through the quiet spaces of life and leaves without apology.

TERROR ORGAN
The Stalag Symphony



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Over 40 minutes of extreme sonic nightmares and buried melodies. Black metal gets acquainted with power electronics. Features Pete Helmkamp (Angel Corpse / Revenge).

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